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THE Corpus MS

(CORPUS CHRISTI COLL., OXFORD)

OF

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

EDITED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

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PART I.

LONDON:

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GROUP A. FRAGMENT I.

§ 1. GENERAL PROLOGUE.

CORPUS MS. (Oxford).

[N.B. The first 72 lines, and other gaps, are supplied from MS. Arch. Seld. B. 14, Bodleian Library.]

Here bigynneth the prolog of this book the which is namede the talis of Caunturbury in the whiche prolog thautour openly declarith the names of alle the pilgremes there condicioun*s* *and* there array.

WHan that Apprille / with his shouris soote
the drought of Marche / hath p*er*shid to the roote
and bathed eu*er*y veyne in swich licoure
of which v*er*tue / engendrid is the floure 4
whan zepherus eke / with his swete brethe
inspirid hath / in eu*er*y holt *and* hethe
the tendre croppis / *and* the yonge sonne
hath in the Ram / his halff cours I-ronne 8
and smale fowlis make melodie
that slepen al nyght / with open eyghe
so priketh hem nature / in here coragis
that longen folk to gon / on pilg*ri*magis 12
and Palmeris for to seke strange strondes
to serue halowes couthe / in sondre londes
and specially / from eu*er*y shiris ende
of Ingelond to Caunturbery thei wende 16
the holy blisfull mart*er* / for to seke
that hem hath holpen / whan thei were seke
bifill that on that sesoñ on a day
in Suthwork atte Tabard as I lay 20
redy to wende / on my pilg*ri*mage
to Caunt*er*bury / with ful deuout corage
at night was come / in-to that hosterie
wel .xxix^ti^ in a companye 24
of sondry folk / bi auenture I-falle
in feloship*e* / *and* pilgremes were thei alle
that toward Caunt*er*bury wolde ryde

1 CORPUS 1 [this page, Arch. Seld. B. 14.]

the chambres *and* stablis weren wyde 28
and wel weren eased at the beste
and shortly whan the sonne was to reste
so hadde I spokyn / wiſh hem eu*er*ychon
that I was of here feloship*e* anon 32
and made forward erly for to ryse [Arch. Seld. B. 14, leaf 1, back]
to take oure wey / there as I yow devise
but nertheles while I haue tyme *and* space
or that I ferther in this tale pace 36
me thynkeſh it accordant to reson
to telle yow al the condicion
of ech of hem so as it semed me
and whiche they were *and* of what degre 40
and eke in what array that thei were inne
and at a knyght than woll I first bigynne
A knyght ther was *and* that a worthi man ¶ A knyght.
that fro the tyme / that he first bigan 44
to riden owt / he loued chyualrie
trouth *and* honour / fredom *and* curtesie
ful worthi was he / in his lordis werre
and ther-to had he riden / no man ferre 48
as wel in cristendom / as in hethenesse
and eu*er*e honoured / for his worthynesse
At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne
ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne 52
aboven alle nac*i*ons in Pruce
in Lectow hadde he reysed *and* in Ruce
no cristenman / so ofte of his degre
in Garnade at the sege eke hadde he be 56
of Algezire *and* riden in Belmarye
at Lyeis was he *and* at Satalye
whan thei were wonne *and* in the grete see
at many a noble arme hadde he be 60
at mortal batailles had he ben ffiftene
and foughten for our feith at Tramessene
in listes thries *and* ay slayn his foo

this ilke worthi knyght hadde ben also 64
somtyme with the lord of Palatye
ayeyne another hethen in Turkye
and eu*er*e-more he had a sou*er*ayne prys
and though that he was worthy he was wys 68
and of his port as meke as is a mayde [MS. Arch. Seld. B. 14, lf 2.]
he neu*er*e yit no vilonye ne saide
in al his liff / vn no man*er*e wight
he was a verry p*er*fit gentill knight 72
ffor to telle ȝow of his array [*The* Corpus MS. *begins here*]
His hors were goode but he was not gay
Of fustion he wered a gepon
Al bismotered with his haburgon 76
ffor he was late y-come from his viage
And wente for to don his pilgrimage
Wiþ him þer was his sone a ȝong squier
A louyere and a lusty bacheler 80
Wiþ lockes crulle as þei were leyd in presse
Of .xx. ȝeer of age he was I gesse
Of his statuture (*sic*) he was of euene lengþe
And wonderly deliuere and gret of strengþe 84
And he hadde be somtyme in Chiuachie
In fflaundres in artoys and Pykardie
and born him wel as of so litel space
In hope to stonden in his lady grace 88
Embroyded was he as it were a mede
All ful of freissche floures white and reede
Synging he was or floytynge al þe day
He was als freissch as is þe monþ of may 92
Schort was his gowne wiþ sleeues longe and wyde
Wel couþe he sitte on an hors and faire ride
He couþe songes make and wel endite
Iuste and eek daunce *and* wel purteray *and* write 96
So hote he loued þat by nighter tale
He sleep nomore þan doþ a nightyngale
Courteys he was lowly and seruisable

and karf biforn his fader atte table 100
A ȝeman hadde he and *ser*uantes namo
At þat time for him liste ride so
And he was clad in coote and hood of greene
A scheef of pocok' arwes bright *and* keene 104
Vnder his belt' he bar ful þriftily
Wel couþe he dresse his takel ȝimanly
His arwes drouped nought' wiþ fetheres lowe
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe 108
A not-hed hadde he wiþ a bro*u*n visage [leaf 2, back]
Of' woode-craft' wel couþe he al þe vsage
Vpon his arm he bar a gay bracer
And by his syde a swerd and a bocler 112
And on þat' oþer side a gay daggere
Harnaysed wel and scharp as point' of' spere
A *Christ*ophre on his brest' of' seluer schene
An horn he bar þe bawdrik' was of' grene 116
A foster was he soþly as I gesse
Ther was also a Nonne a Prioresse
That' of' hir smyling' was ful symple a[nd] coy
Hir grettest' oþ was but' by seint' loy 120
And sche was cleped ma dame Englentyne
ffol wel sche song' þe seruise diuine
Entuned in hir nose ful semely
And frenssch sche spak' ful faire and fetisly 124
After þe scole of' stratford' atte Bowe
ffor ffrenssh of' Parys was to hire vnknowe
At' mete wel I-taught' was sche wiþ-alle
Sche leet' no morsell from hire lippes falle 128
Ne wete hire fyngres in hir sauce deepe
Wel couþe sche carie a morsel and wel keepe /
That' no drope ne fell vpon hir breste
In Curtesye was sette ful moche hire leste 132
Hir ouer lippe wyped sche so cleene
That' in hir cuppe þer was no ferthing' seene
Of grete whan sche dronken hadde hir draughte

fful semely after hir mete sche raughte 136
And sikerly sche was of gret disporte
And ful plesant and amyable of porte
And peyned hire to counterfete cheere
Of court and to ben estatlich of maneere 140
And to ben holden digne of reuerence
But for to speken of hir conscience
Sche was so charitable *and* so pytous
Sche wolde weepe if þat sche sawe a mous 144
Kaught in a trappe if it were deed or bledde [leaf 3]
Of smale houndes hadde sche þat sche fedde
With rosted fleissh or mylk or wastel brede
But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were dede 148
Or if men smot it with a ȝerde smerte/
And al was conscience and tendre herte/
fful semelich hir wympil pynched was
Hir nose was streight hire yghen grey as glas 152
Hir mouth ful smal and þerto softe and rede
But sikerly sche hadde a fair forhede
It was almost a spanne brood I trowe
ffor hardely sche was nought vndergrowe 156
fful fetys was hir cloke as I was war
Of smal coral aboute hir arm sche bar
A payre of bedes gauded al with greene
And þer-on heng a broche of gold ful scheene 160
On which þer was first writen with a crowned A.
And after. Amor vincit omnia.
Anoþer Nonne with hir hadde sche /
That was hir Chapelleyne and prestes þre 164
A Monk þer was a fair for þe maistrie
And out Ridere þat loued venerie
A manly man to ben an abbot able /
fful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable / 168
And whan he rood men might his brydel heere
Gynglyng in a whistlyng wynd as cleere
And eek as lowde as doþ þe chapel belle

Ther as þis lord was keper of þe selle 172
The Reule of sent Maure or of seint Beneit
By-cause þat it was old and somdel streit
This ilke monk leet olde þinges pace
And held after þe newe world þe space 176
He ȝaf nought of þe text a pulled hen
That seith þat hunters be nought holy men
Ne þat a monk whan he is recheles
Is likned til a fyssh̄ þat is waterles 180
This is to seie a monk out of his cloystre [leaf 3, back]
But þilke text / held he not worth an oystre /
And I seide his opinion̄ was good
What schulde he studie and make himseluen wood 184
Vpon a book alwey in cloyste to poure
Or swynke with his hondes and laboure
As austyn bit how schal þe world be serued
Lat austyn haue his swynk to him reserued 188
Ther-fore he was a p*ri*kasour aright
Grehoundes he hadde swift as foule in flight
Of prikynge and of huntyng for þe hare
Was alle his luste for no cost wolde he spare 192
I seigh his sleues I-purfiled at þe hond
Wiþ grys and þat þe fynest of a lond
And for to festne his hood vnder þe chynne
He hadde of gold wrought a ful curious pynne/ 196
A loue knotte in þe gretter ende þer was/
His hed was balled þat schon as eny glas
And eek his face as he hadde ben anoynt
He was a lord ful fatt and in good poynt 200
His eyghen stepe and rollyng in his hede
That stemed as a forneys of a lede
His bootes souple his hors in gret estate
Now certeinly he was a fair prelate 204
He nas nat pale as a forpyned goost
A fat swan loued he best of any rost
His palfray was as bro*un* as is a berie

A ffrere þer was a wantoñ and a merye 208
A lymitour a ful solempne man
In alle þe ordres foure is non þat can
So mochil of daliance *and* fair langage
He hadde made ful many a mariage 212
Of ȝonge wo*m*men at his owne cost
Vnto his ordre he was a noble post
fful wel biloued and famulier was he
Wiþ frankeleyns ouer al in his contre 216
And wiþ worþi wo*m*men of þe toun [leaf 4]
ffor he hadde power of confessioun
As seyde himself more þan a curat
ffor of his ordre he was licenciat 220
fful swetly herde he confessioñ
And plesant was his absolucioñ
He was an esy man to ȝiue pena*u*nce
Ther as he wiste to haue a good pitaunce 224
ffor vnto a pouer ordre for to ȝiue
Is signe þat a man is wel I-schriue
ffor if he ȝaf he dorste make auant
He wiste þat / a man was repentant 228
ffor many a man so hard is of his herte
He may nought wepe al-þough him sore smerte
Ther-fore in stede of weepyng and preyeres
Men mote ȝeue siluer to þe pouere freeres 232
His typet was ay farsed ful of knyfes
And pynnes for to ȝiue faire wyues
And certeynly he hadde a mery note /
Wel couþe he synge *and* playen on a rote 236
Of ȝeddynges he bar witterly þe pris
His nekke whit / was as þe flour-delys
Ther-to he was strong as a Champio*u*n
He knew þe tauernes wel in euery toun 240
And euerich hostiller *and* tapstere
Bet þan a lazar or a Beggere
ffor vnto such a worþi man as he

Acorded nought as by his faculte 244
To haue with such sek lazer aqueintance
It is nought honest it may nought auaunce
ffor to delen with such poraile
But aH with Riche and sellere of vitaille 248
And ouer al þer as profyt scholde arise
Curtays he was and lowly of seruise
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous
He was þe beste begger in his hous 252
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
ffor þough a widewe hadde noughH a scho [leaf 4, back]
So plesant was his In principio
ȝet wolde he haue a ferþing or he wente
His purchas was wel bettre þan his rente 256
And rage he couþe right as it were a whelpe /
In louedayes þer couþe he moche helpe /
ffor þer he was not lich a cloysterer
With a thred-bare cope as a pore scoler 260
But he was lik a maister or a pope
Of double worstede was his semy-cope /
That rounded as a belle on the presse
Somwhat he lipsed for his wantounesse 264
To make his englissh sweete vpon his tonge
And in his harpyng whan þat he hadde songe /
His yghen twyncled in his heed aright
As don þe sterres in þe frosty night 268
This worþi lymito*ur* was cleped huberd
A marchant was þer with a forked berd
In mottle and heigH on horse he satte
Vp-on his heued a fflaundrissh beuer hatte 272
His bootes clapsed faire and fetysly
His resons he spak ful solempnely
Schewyng alwey þe encres of his wynnynge
He wolde þe see were kept for eny þinge 276
By-twixe MiddelburgH and Orewelle

Wel coupe he in eschaunge scheldes selle /
This worpy man ful wel his witte bisette
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette 280
So statly was he of his gouernance
With his bargaynes and his cheuissance
ffor sope he was a worpi man with-all
But soply to sein I not how men him call 284
A Clerk per was of Oxenford also
That vnto logyk hadde long I-go
As lene was his hors as is a rake
And he nas not right fat I vndertake 288
But loked holwe and per-to soburly [leaf 5]
fful predbare was his ouereste courtepy
ffor he had geten him no benifice
Ne was so worldly for to haue office 292
ffor him was leuer to haue at his bed hede
Twenty bookes clad in blak and rede
Of Aristotle and his philosophie
Than robes riche or fithel or gay Sautrie / 296
But al by pat he was a philosophre
ȝit had he but a litel gold in cofre
But al pat he might of his frendes hente /
On bokes and on lernyng he it / spente 300
And besily gan for pe soules preye
Of hem pat ȝaf him wher-with to scoleye
Of studie took he most cure and most heede
Nought o word spak he more pan was neede 304
And pat was seyd in forme and reu*er*ence
And schort and quyk and ful of heigh sentence
Sownyng in moral vertu was his speche
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche 308
A Sergeant of pe lawe war and wys
That often hadde ben at pe Parvys
That was also / ful riche of excellence
Discret he was and of gret reu*er*ence 312
He semed swich his wordes were so wise

Iustice he was ful often in assise
By patent and by plein commissioñ
ffor his science and for his heigh renoun 316
Of fees and robes had he many oon
So gret a purchaceour was nowher non
Al was fee simple to him in effecte
His purchasynge might not ben infecte 320
No wher so besy a man as he þer nas
And ȝit he semed bisiere þan he was
In termes hadde he caas and doomes alle
That from þe tyme of king William were falle 324
Ther-to he couþe endite *and* make a þink [leaf 5, back]
Ther couþe no wight pynche at his writynk
And euery statut couþe he plein by Rote
He rood but homly in a medly coote 328
Gert with a seint of silk. wiþ barres smale /
Of his array telle I no lenger tale
A ffrankeleyn was in his compaignie
Whit was his berd as is the dayessye 332
Of his complexioñ he was sanguyne
Wel loued he by þe morwe a sop in wyne
To lyuen in delit euer was his wone /
ffor he was Opiournes owne sone 336
That held opinioñ þat plein delite
Was verrey felicite parfite
An houshalder and þat a gret was he
Seint Iulian he was in his contre 340
His breed his ale was alweys after oon
A better envyned man was neuer noon
Wiþoute bake mete was neuer his hous
Of fissh and fleissh and þat so plenteuous 344
It snewed in his hous of mete and drink
Of alle deyntes þat men coude þink
After þe sondry sesons of þe ȝere
So changed he his mete and his sopeere 348
fful many a fat partrich hadde he in Mewe

And many a brem and many a luce in stuwe
Wo was his cooke but' his sauce were
Poynant' and scharp and redy all his gere 352
His table dormant'. in his halle alway
Stod redy couered all the longe day
At' Sessions þer was he lord and sire
fful ofte tyme he was knight' of' þe schire 356
An anelas and a gisper al of' silke
Heng' at' his girdel whit' as morne mylke
A scherref' had he ben and a comptour
Was nowher such a worþi vauasour 360
An haburdaissher and a Carpenter [leaf 6]
A Webbe a Dyer and a Tapecer
And þei were cloþed alle in oo liuere
Of' a solempne and a gret ffrat*er*nite 364
fful freissch and newe here gere a-piked was
Here knyfes nere chaped nought' wiþ bras
But' all wiþ siluer wrought' ful clene and wel
Here gerdles and here pouches eueridel 368
Wel semed ech of' hem a fair burgeys
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys
Euerich for þe wisdom þat' he can
Was schaply for to ben an Alderman 372
ffor Catell hadde þei ynough and rente
And eek' here wyues wolde it wel assente
And elles certein þei were to blame
It' is ful fair to be cleped ma dame 376
And gon to vigilies al bifore
And haue a mantel rialliche / bore
A Cook' þei hadde wiþ hem for þe nones
To boyle þe chikenes with þe maryebones 380
And poudre marchānt' tart' and gallyngale
Wel kowde he know a draught' of' londōn ale /
He couþe rost' and seþe and broile and frie
Maken mortreux and wel bake a pye 384
But' gret' harm was it' as it þoughte me

That on his schyne a mormal hadde he
ffor blank-manger þat made he wiþ þe beste /
A schipman was þer wonyng fer by weste 388
ffor ought I wot he was of Dertemouthe
He rood vpon a rouncy as he couþe
In a gowne of faldyng to þe knee /
A dagger hangyng in a lace hadde he / 392
Aboute his nekke vnder his arm a-doun
The hoote somer had mad his hiew al broun
And certeinly he was a good felawe
fful many a draught of wyn he hadde drawe 396
ffrom Burdeaux warde whil þe chapmen sleepe [leaf 6, back]
Of nyce conscience took he no keepe
If þat he faught and had þe heigher honde
By water he sent hem hom to euery londe 400
But of his craft to riken wel his tydes
His stremes and his daunger him besydes
His herberwe and his moone and his ledmannage
Ther was non such from hulle to kartage 404
Hardy he was and wys to vndurtake
With many a tempest had his berd be schake
He knew alle þe hauenes as they were
ffro Gotlond to þe Cape de fynystere 408
And euery Cryke in Bretaigne and in Spaigne
His barge y-cleped was þe Mawdeleyne
With vs þer was a Doctour of Phisike
In al þis world ne was þer non him like 412
To speke of Phisik and of Surgerie
ffor he was grounded in astronomie
He kept his pacient a ful gret del
In houres by his magiq*ue* naturel 416
Wel couþe he fortune the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient
He knewe þe cause of euery maladie /
Were it of hoot of cold or moist or drie / 420
And wher engendred and of what humour

He was a verray p*ar*fit' practisour
The cause I-knowe and of' his harm þe rote /
Anon he ȝaf' þe sike man his bote 424
fful redy had he his appotecaries
To sende hem drugges and his letuaries
ffor ech of' hem made oþer for to wynne
Here frendschip nas nat / newe for to gynne / 428
Wel knew he þe olde Escalapius
And discorides and eke Rusus
Olde ypocras haly and Galien
Serapion Razie and auyzen 432
Auerois damascien and Constantine [leaf 7]
Bernard and Gatisdene and Gilbertine
Of' his diete mesurable was he
ffor it' was of' no sup*er*fluite 436
But' of' gret norisshing' and digestible
His studie was but litel on the bible
In sangweyn and in pers he clad was al
Lyned wiþ Taffata and with Sendal 440
And yet' he was but' esy of dispense
He kepte þat' he wan in Pestilence
ffor gold in phisiq*ue* is accordial
Ther-fore he loued gold in special 444
A good wif' þer was of' by-syde bathe
But' sche was somdel def' and þat' was skaþe
Of' cloþ-makyng' sche hadde such an haunte
Sche passed hem of' ypres and of' Gaunte 448
In al þe parissche wif' ne was þer noon
þat' to þe offryng' toforn hire schulde gon
And if' þer dede certein wroþ was sche
That' sche was oute of' alle charite / 452
Hire couerchiefs ful fyne were of' grounde
I dorste swere þei weyeden ten pounde /
That' on a soneday weren vpon hir hede
Hire hosen weren of' fyn scarlet' reede 456
fful streyt' yteyed and schoos ful moyste and newe

Bolde was hir face and fair and reed of' hewe
Sche was a worþi wo*m*man al hir lyue
Housbondes atte chirche dore sche hadde fyue 460
Wiþouten oþer companye in ȝouþe
But' þer-of' needeþ nought' to speke as nouþe
And þries hadde sche ben at Ier*usalem*
Sche hadde passed many a strange strem 464
At' Rome sche hadde ben and at' Boloigne
In Galice at' saint' Iame and at' Coloigne
Sche couþe moche of wandring' by þe weye
Gat' toþed was sche soþly for to seye 468
Vpon an ambler esely sche satte [leaf 7, back]
I-wympled wel and on hir heed an hatte
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe
A fote-mantell abouten hir hipes large / 472
And on hire feet' a paire of' spores scharpe
In felaschipe wel couþe sche laughe and carpe
Of' remedies of' loue sche knew p*ar* chaunce /
ffor sche couþe of' þat' art' þe colde daunce 476
A good man was þer of religio*u*n
And was a poure p*er*sonn of' a toun
But' riche he was of' holy þought and werk'
He was also a lerned man and a clerk' 480
That' cristes gospell trewly wolde preche
His p*ar*isshiens deuoutly wolde he teche
Benigne he was and wonder diligent
And in aduersite ful pacient' 484
and swich he was preued ofte siþes
fful loþ were him to cursen for his tyþes /
But' raþer wolde he yeuen out' of' doute
Vnto his poure parisshens aboute 488
Of' his offryng' and of' his substance
He couþe in litel þing' haue suffisance
Wyd was his parisshe and houses fer a-sondre
But' he ne lefte nought' for rayn ne þondre 492
In seknesse nor in meschief' to visite

The ferreste in his parisshe moche and lite
Vpon his feet and in his hond a staf
This noble ensample to his scheep he yaf 496
That ferst he wrought and aftirward he taughte
Out of þe gospel he þo wordes caughte
And þis fugure he addede eek / þer-to
That if gold ruste what schal Iren do 500
ffor if a prest be foul on whom we truste
No wonder is a lewed man to Ruste
And schame it is if a prest take kepe
A schiten schepp*er*de and a clene schepe 504
Wel ought a prest ensample for to ȝyue [leaf S]
By his clennes how þat his scheep schulde lyue
He sette nought his benefice to hire
And leet his scheep acombred in þe myre 508
And ran to londoñ vnto Seinte Poules
To seeke him a Chaunterie for soules
Or with a breþerede for to be with-holde /
But duelte at hom and kepte wel his folde 512
So þat þe wolf ne made it not miscarie
He was a schepp*er*de and not a mercenarie
And þough he holy were and vertuous
He was nought to synful men dispitous 516
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne
But in his teching discret and benigne
To drawe folk to heuen by fairnesse
By good ensample þis was his bisynesse / 520
But it were ony p*er*sone obstinat
What so he were of heigh or low estat
Him wolde he snebbe scharply for þe nones
A bettre prest I trowe þat nowher non es 524
He waited after no pompe *and* reuerence
Ne maked him a spiced conscience
But cristes lore and his apostles twelue
He taught but ferst he folwed in himselue / 528
With him þer was a plowma*n* was his broþer

That hadde I-ladde of dong ful many a foþer
A trewe swynker and a good was he
Lyuyng in pees and *par*fit charite 532
God loued he best wiþ alle his herte
At alle tymes þough him gamed or smerte
And þan his Neighebore right as him selue
He wolde þressche and þerto dike *and* delue 536
ffor cristes sake for euery pouere wight
Wiþouten hire if it lay in his might
His tiþes payed he ful fair and well
Boþe of his p*ro*pre swynk and his catell 540
In a Tabbard he rood vpon a mere [leaf 8, back]
Ther was also a Reeue and a Mellere /
A Sompno*ur* and a Pardoner also
A Mauncipie *and* my self þer nare no mo / 544
The meller was a stout carl for þe nones
fful big he was of brawn and eek of bones
That proued wel for ouer al þar he cam
Atte wrastlyng he wold haue awey þe ram 548
He was schort schuldred a þikke knarre
The was no dore þat he nolde heue of harre
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heede
His berd as eny sowe or eny fox was reede 552
And þerto brod as þough it were a spade /
Vpon þe cop right of his nose he hade
A wert and þer-on stood a tuft of heeres
Reed as the berstles of a sowes Eres / 556
Hise nose-þrilles blake weren and wide
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde
His mouþ as gret was as a gret fourneys
He was a Iangler and a goliardeys 560
And þat was most of synne and harlotries
Wel couþe he stele corn and tolle þries
And ȝit he hadde a þombe of gold parde
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he 564
A Baggepipe wel couþe he blowe and soun

And þer-with-al he brought vs out of toun
A gentil maunciple was þer of a temple /
Of which achatours mighte take exsemple / 568
ffor to ben wyse in byeng of vitaile
ffor wheþer þat he paied or took by taile
Algate he wayted so in his achate
That he was ay biforn and in good estate / 572
Now is not þat of god a ful fair grace
That such a lewed mannes witt schal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lernede men
Of maistres hadde mo þan þries ten 576
That were of lawe expert and curious [leaf 9]
Of which þer was a dosein in that hous
Worþi to ben Stywardes of Rente and londe
Of any lord þat is in Ingelonde 580
To make him lyue by his p*ro*pre good
In honour detteles but if þat he were wood
Or lyue as skarsly as him list desire
And able for to helpen al a schire 584
In any cas þat mighte falle or happe
And ȝit þis manciple sette here alþer cappe
The Reeue was a sclend*er* colerik man
His berd was schaue as nygh as euer he can 588
His her was by his eeres ful round y-schorn
His toppe was dokked lik a prest biforn
fful longe were his legges and ful lene
I-lik a staf þer was no calf y-sene 592
Wel couþe he kepe a garner or a bynne
Ther was non auditour couþe on him wynne
Wel wist he by þe drought and by þe reyne
The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyne 596
His lordes scheep his neet his dayerie
His swyn his hors his stoor and his pulletrie
Was holly in þis Reeues gouernynge /
And by his couenant ȝaf þe rikenynge 600
Syn þat his lord was twenty ȝeer of age

Ther couþe no man brynge him in arrerage
Ther nas baillif ne herde nor oþer hyne
That he ne knew his sleight and his covyne 604
They were adrad of him as of þe deþ
His wonyng was ful fair vpon an heþ
Wiþ greene trees schadewed was his place
He couþe bettre þan his lord purchace 608
fful Riche he was astored priuely
His lord he couþe plese wel subtily
To yiue and lene him of his oughne good
And haue a þank and yet a cote and hood 612
In ȝouþe he hadde lerned a good mester [leaf 9, back]
He was a wel good wrighte a Carpenter
This reeue satte vpon a ful good stot
That was al pomely grey and highte scot 616
A long Surcote of pers vpon he hadde
And by his syde he bar a rusty bladde
Of Northfolk was þis Reue of which I telle
Bysyden a toun men clepen it Baldeswelle 620
Tukked he was as is a frere aboute
And euer he rood þe hyndrest of oure route
A Somynour was þer with vs in þat place
That hadde a fyri cherubynnes face 624
ffor Sauseflem he was with eyghen narwe /
Als hoot he was and leccherous as a sparwe
Wiþ scalled browes blak and piled berde /
Of his visage children weren afferde 628
Ther nas quyk siluer litarge or bremston
Boras orsure ne oyle of Tarte noon
Ne oynement þat wolde clense and byte
To him might helpe of his whelkes white 632
Nor of þe knobbes sittyng in his cheekes
Wel loued he garlik oynons and eek leekes
And for to drinke strong wyn reed as blood
Than wolde he speke and crye as he were wood 636
And whan þat he wel dronken hadde þe wyn

Than wold he speke no word but latyne
A fewe termes hadde he tuo or þre
That he had lerned out of som decre 640
No wonder is he herd it al þe day
And eek ȝe knowen it wel how þat a Iay
Can clepe watte as wel as can þe pope
But who so couþe in oþer þing him grope 644
Than hadde he spent al his philosophie
Ay questio quid Iuris wolde he crye
He was a gentil harlot and a kynde
A bettre felaw schulde men not fynde 648
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn [leaf 10]
A good felawe to haue his concubyn
A twelf moneth and excuse him atte fulle /
fful priuely eek a fynch couþe he pulle / 652
And if he fond owher a good felawe
He wolde techen him to han non awe
In such caas of þe Erchedeknes curs
But if mannes soule were in his purs 656
ffor in his purs he scholde punyssched be
Purs is þe Erchedeknes helle seide he
But wel I wot he lyhede right in dede
Of cursyng ought eche gilty man him drede 660
ffor curs wil sle right as assoylyng sauith
And also war him of a Significauith
In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
The yonge gerles of þe diocise 664
And knew here counseil and what was al here rede
A garland hadde he sette vpon his heede
As gret as it were for an ale stake
A bokeler hadde he made him of a cake / 668
With him þer rood a gentill pardoner
Of Rouncyuall his frend and his comper
That streight was comen fro þe court of Rome
fful lowe he song come hider loue tome 672
This Somnour bar to him a stif burdoun

Was neuer trompe of[t] half[t] so gret[t] a soun
This p*ar*doner hadde her as yelow as wax
But[t] smothe it heng[t] as doth a strik[t] of flax. 676
By ounces heng[t] his lokkes þat[t] he hadde /
And þer with he his schuldres ouer spradde
But[t] þinne it[t] lay by culpoñs on and oon
But[t] hood for Iolite werede he noon 680
ffor it[t] was trussed vp in his walet[t]
Him þoughte he rood al of[t] the newe get[t]
Discheuele saf[t] his cappe he rood al bare
Swich glaryng[t] yghen hadde he as an hare 684
A vernicle hadde he sewid on his cappe [leaf 10, back]
His walet[t] [lay] biforn him in his lappe /
Bret[t] ful of p*ar*doñ come*n* fro Rome al hoot
A voys he hadde as smal as a goot[t] 688
No berd ne hadde he ne neuer schulde haue
As smothe it was as it[t] ware late schaue
I trowe he were a geldyng[t] or a mare
But[t] of[t] his craft[t] fro Berwik[t] in to ware 692
Ne was þer such anoþer p*ar*doner
ffor in his male he hadde a pilewber
Which þat[t] he sayde was oure lady veyle
He seide he hadde a gobet[t] of þe seyle 696
That[t] seint[t] petir hadde whan þat[t] he wente
Vpon the see til ih*es*u crist[t] him hente
He hadde a Croys of[t] latoñ ful of[t] stones
And in a glas he hadde pigges boones 700
But[t] with þese reliqes whan þat[t] he fonde
A poure p*er*soñ dwellyng[t] vpon londe /
Vpon a day he gat[t] him more moneye
Than þat[t] þe p*er*soñ gat[t] in monþes tweye 704
And þus with feyned flatering[t] and Iapes
He made þe p*er*soñ and þe poeple his apes
But[t] trewely to tellen atte þe laste
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste 708
Wel couþe he rede a lessonn or a story

But alþer best he song an offertory
ffor wel he wiste whan þat song was songe
He moste preche and wel affile his tonge 712
To wynne seluer as he [right] wel cowde
Ther fore he song so meriely and lowde /
Now haue I told ȝow soþly in a clause
The estat. the array þe nombre and eeke þe cause 716
Whi þat assembled was þis companie
In Suthwerk at þis gentil hostelrie /
That hightе þe Tabbard faste by þe belle
But now is tyme to yow for to telle / 720
How þat we beeren vs þat ilke night [leaf 11]
Whan we were in þat Osterie alight
And after wol I telle of oure viage
And all the remenant of our pilgrimage 724
But first I pray ȝow of your curtesie
The ȝe ne rette it nought my vilenye
Though þat I pleinly speke in þis matere
To telle ȝow here wordes and here cheere 728
Ne þough I speke here wordes propurly
ffor þis ȝe knowen as wel as I
Who so schal telle a tale after a man
He mot reherse as neyh as euer he can 732
Euerich a word if it be in his charge
Al speke he neuer so rudely and large
Or elles he moot telle his tale vntrewe
Or feyne þinges or fynde wordes newe 736
He may nought spare al þough he were his broþer
He moot als wel seie o word as anoþer
Crist spak himself ful brode in holy writte
And wel ȝe wot no vilenye is itte 740
Ek Plato seith who so can him rede
The wordes mot be cosyn to þe dede
Also I preyȝe ȝow forȝiue it me
Al haue I not set folk in here degre 744
Heer in þis tale as þat þei scholden stonde

My witt is schort ȝe may wel vnderstonde
Gret cheere maad oure ost vs euerychon
And to þe souper sette he vs anon 748
He serued vs with vitailles atte beste
Strong was þe wyn and wel drynken vs leste
A semly man our hoste he was with alle
ffor to ben a marchall in an halle 752
A large man he was with eyȝen stepe
A fairer burgeys is þer non in Chepe
Bold of his speche and wys and wel y-taught
And of manhode him lakkede right naught 756
Ek þer to he was right a merie man [leaf 11, back]
And after soper pleyen he bigan
And spak of merþe amonges oþer þinges
Whan þat he hadde maad our rikenynges 760
And seide þus Now lordynges trewely
ȝe ben to me welcome right hertely
ffor by my trouthe if þat I schal not lye
I seyh not þis yer so mery a companye 764
At oones in þis herberw as is now
ffayn wold I don ȝou merthe wist I how
And of a merþe I am right now biþought
To don you eese and it schal coste nought 768
ye gon to Caunturbury god yow speede
The blisful martir quyte ȝou ȝour meede
And wel I woot as ȝe gon by þe weye
ye schapen ȝou to talen and to pleye 772
ffor trewely confort ne merþe is non
To riden by þe wey domb as a ston
And þer for wol I make you disport
As I seide erst and do you som confort 776
And if ȝou likeþ all by on assent
ffor to stonden at my Iuggement
And for to werken as I schal ȝou seie
To morwe whan ȝe riden by þe weie / 780
Now by my fader soule þat is deed

But ȝe be merye I wil ȝeue ȝow my*n* heed
Hold vp ȝour hond wiþoute more speche /
Our counseil was not longe for to seche / 784
vs þought it was not worþ to make it wys
And g*ra*unted him wiþoute more avys
And bad him seye his verdit as him leste
Lordynge*s* quod he / now herkneþ for þe beste 788
But take it nought I prey ȝow in disdeigne
This is þe poynt to speke schort and pleigne
That ech of ȝou to schorte with ȝour weye
In þis viage schal telle tales tweie 792
To Caunturbury-ward I mene it so [leaf 12]
And homward he schal tellen oþer tuo
Of auentures þat whilom haue bifall
And which of yow þat beriþ him best of all 796
That is to sein that telleþ in þis cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas ./
Schal haue a soup*er* at our alþer cost
Her in þis place sittynge by þis post 800
Whan þat we comen aȝein fro Canturbury
And for to make ȝou þe more mury
I wil my seluen goodly with ȝou ryde
Right at myn owne cost and be ȝour gyde 804
And who so wol my Iuggement wiþ seye
Schal paye al þat we spende by þe weye
And if ȝe vouche saf þat it be so
Tel me anon wiþouten wordes moo 808
And I wol erly schape me þer fore
This þing was graunted and our oþes swore
With ful glad herte and preyȝen him also
That he wolde vouche saf for to do so 812
And þat he wolde ben our gouernour
And of oure tales Iugge and reportour
And sette a soup*er* at a certein pris
And we wiln rewled ben at his deuys / 816
In heighe and lowe and þus by oon assent

We ben accorded to þe Iuggement
And þer vpon þe wyn was fet anon
We dronken and to reste went echon 820
Wiþouten eny lenger taryyng
A morwe whan þe day bigan to spryng
vp ros oure oost and was our alþer cok
And gadered vs to gider all in a flok 824
And forþ we riden a litel more þan paas
vnto þe wateryng of seint Thom*as*
And þer our oost gan his hors areste
And seide lordes herkneþ if you leste / 828
ȝe wot ȝour forward and I it ȝou recorde [leaf 12, back]
If euynsong and morwesong acorde
lat see now who schal telle þe firste tale
As euer mote I drynke wyn of ale 832
Who so be rebel to my Iuggement /
Schal paie for all that by þe weie is spent
Now draweþ Cut or þat we ferþer twynne
he which þat haþ þe schortest schal bigynne 836
¶ Sir knight q*uo*d he my maister and my lord
Now draweþ Cut for þat is myn acord
Comeþ nerre quod he my lady prioresse
And ȝe sir clerk let be ȝour schamfastnesse 840
Ne studieþ nought lay hond to eu*er*y man
Anon to drawe euery wight bygan
And schortly for to tellen as it was /
Were it by auenture or sort or cas 844
The soþ is þis the Cut fel to þe knight
Of which ful bliþe and glad was euery wight
And telle he moste his tale as it was resoun
By forward and by composicio*u*n 848
As ȝe han herd what nedeþ wordes mo
And whan þis good man saugh þat it was so
As he þat wys was and obedient
To keepe his forward by his free assent 852
He seide siþþe I schal begynne þe game

What' welcome be þe Cutte a goddes name
Now lat' vs ride and herkneþ what' I seye
And with þat' word we riden forþ oure weye 856
And he bigan with right' a merye cheere
His tale anon and seyde as ȝe may heere

Iam · q*ue* domos patrias scitice post asp*er*a gentis
Prelia laurig*er*o *etc*.

Whilom was as olde stories tellen vs
Ther was a Duk^e^ that highte Theseus / 860
Of^e^ Athenes he was / lord and gouernour
And in his tyme such a Conquerour
That^e^ grettere was non vnder þe sonne [leaf 13]
fful many a riche Contre hadde he wonne 864
What^e^ with his wisdam and his chiuallerie
He conquered all þe regne of^e^ ffeminie
That^e^ whilom was I-cleped Scithia
And weddede þe queen ypolita 868
And brought^e^ hir hom wiþ him in his contre
With muche glorie and gret^e^ solempnite
And eek^e^ hir ȝonge suster Emelye
And þus with victorie and with melodie 872
Late I þis noble duk^e^ to Athenes ride [line erased here, apparently the previous one repeated.]
And all his host^e^ in armes him bisyde
And certes if^e^ it nere to long^e^ to heere
I wolde haue tolde fully þe manere 876
how wonnen was þe regne of ffeminie
By Theseus and by his Chiualrie
And of^e^ the grete bataille for þe noones
Bitwixen athenes and Amazones 880
And how asseged was Ipolita
The faire hardy quene of^e^ Scithia
And of^e^ þe fest^e^ þat^e^ was at^e^ hir weddyng^e^
And of^e^ þe tempest^e^ at^e^ hir hom comyng^e^ 884
But^e^ al þat^e^ þing^e^ I moot^e^ as now forbere /
I haue god wot^e^ a large feeld to ere
And weyke ben þe oxen in my plough
The remnant^e^ of^e^ þe tale is long^e^ ynough 888
I wol not^e^ letten eek^e^ noon of^e^ þis route

Lat' eu*er*y felawe telle his tale aboute
And lat' se now who schal þe soup*er* wynne
And þer I lafte I wil a3ein bigynne 892
This Duk' of' whom I make mencio*un*
Whan he was comen almost' to þe toun
In all his wele and his moste pryde
He was war as he cast' his eyhe asyde 896
Wher þat' þer kneled in þe heighe weye
A company of' ladies tweye and tweye [leaf 13, back]
Eche after oþer cladde in cloþes blake
But' such a cry and such a woo þei make 900
That' in þis world is creature lyuynge
That' herde such anoþer weymentynge
And of' þis cry þey nolde neuer stente
Til þei þe Reynes of' his bridel hente 904
What' folk' ben 3e þat' at myn hom comynge
P*er*tourbe so my feste wiþ cryinge
Quod Theseus haue 3e so gret' enuye
Of' myn honour that' þus compleigne and crie 908
Or who haþ 3ou mysboden or offended
And telleþ me if' it may ben amended
And whi þat' 3e ben cloþed thus in blak
The eldest' lady of' hem all*e* spak' 912
Whan sche had swouned with a dedly cheere
That' it' was routhe for to seen and heere
¶ Sche seide lord to whom fortune haþ yiuen
Victorie and as a conquerour to lyuen 916
Not' greueþ ous 3oure gloire and your' honour
But' we beseke mercy and socour
Haue mercy on our woo and our distresse
Som drope of' pite þurgh þi gentilesse / 920
vpon vs wrecched wo*m*men let' 3e fall
ffor certes lord þer is non of' vs all
That' sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene
Now be we Caytifs as it' is wel seene 924
Thanked be fortune and hir false whiel

That non estat ensureth for to ben wel
Now certes lord to abyde ȝoure presence /
Here in þis temple of the goddesse Clemence 928
We haue be waytinge al þis fourte night
Helpe vs lord siþ it is in þy might
¶ I wrecche which þat weepe and weile þus
Was whilom wyf of king Cappaneus 932
That starf at Thebes cursed be þat day
And alle we þat ben in þis array [leaf 14]
And maken al þis lamentacioun
We losten all our housbondes at þat toun 936
Whil þat passege þer aboute lay
And yet now þe olde Creon weiloway
That lord is now of Thebes þe Cite
ffulfild of Ire and of Iniquite 940
He for despite and for his Tyrannie
To don þe deede bodies vilenye
Of all oure lordes whiche þat ben slawe
Haþ all þe bodies on an heep y-drawe 944
And wol nought suffre hem by non assent
Neither to ben y-buried noþer y-brent
But makeþ houndes ete hem in despyt
And with þat word wiþoute more respit 948
Thei fellen gruf and cryden pitously
Haue on vs wrecchede wommen som mercy
And lat our sorwe synken in þin herte
This gentil duk doun from his courser sterte 952
With herte pitous whan he herde hem speke
Him þoughte þat his herte wolde breke
Whan he saugh hem so pite and so mate
That whilom were of so gret astate 956
And in his armes he hem all vp hente
And hem conforteþ in ful good entente
And swor his oth as he was trewe knight
He wolde don so ferforþly his might 960
Vpon þe tyrant hem to wreke

That' aⱡⱡ þe poeple of' grece scholde speke
How Creon was of' Theseus y-serued
As he þat' hadde his deþ ful wel deserued 964
And right' anon wiþouten more abod
His baner he displaied and forth rood
To Thebes-ward and al his host' biside
No nerre Athenes wolde he go ne ride 968
Ne take his ease fully half' a day
But' onward on his way þat' night' he lay [leaf 14, back]
And sente anon ypolita þe queene
And Emelye hir ȝonge suster scheene 972
Vnto þe toun of' Athenes to dwelle
And forþ he ritte þer nys namore to telle
The rede Statue of' Mars with spere and targe
So schineþ in his white baner large 976
That' alle þe feelde gliteren vp and doun
And by his baner born is his pynoun
Of' gold ful riche in which þer was y-bete
The Mynataur which þat' he wan in Grece 980
Thus rit' þis duk' þus rit' þis conquerour
And in his host' of Chiuallerie þe flour
Til þat' he come to Thebes and alight'
ffaire in þe feeld þer as he þought' to fight' 984
But schortly for to speken of' þis þing'
With Creon which þat' was of Thebes king'
He faught' and slough him manly as a knight
In pleyn bataile and putte þe folk' to flight 988
And by assent' he wan þe Cite after
And rente adoun boþe wall and sparre and rafter
And to þe ladies he restored ageyn
The bones of' here frendes þat' were slayn 992
To don obsequies as was þo þe gyse
But it were all to longe to deuyse
The grete clamour and þe waymentyng'
That' the ladys made atte brennyng' 996
Of' þe bodies and þe gret' honour

That Theseus þe noble conquerour
Doþ to þe bodies whan þei from him wente
But schortly for to telle is myn entente 1000
Whan þat þis worþi duk þis theseus
Haþ Creon slayn and wonne Thebes þus
Stille in þat feeld he took al night his reste
And dide with alle þe contre as him leste 1004
To ransake in þe caas of þe bodies deede
Hem for to streepe of harneys and of wede [leaf 15]
The pilours diden bysynesse and cure
After þe bataile and disconfiture 1008
And so bifelle þat in the caas þei founde
Thurgh girt with many a greuous blody wounde
Tuo ȝonge knightes liggynge by and by
Boþe in armes same wrought ful richely 1012
Of which tuo Arcita hight þat oon
And þat oþer knight hight Palamon
Nat fully quyk ne fully deed þei were
But by her cote armo*ur*s and by here gere 1016
The heraudes knewe hem self in special
As þei þat weren of þe blood real
Of Thebes and of sustren tuo y-born
Out of þe caas þe pilours han hem torn 1020
And han hem caried softe vnto þe tente
Of Theseus and he ful sone hem sente /
To Athenes to dwellen in prisoun
p*er*petuelly hem nolde he not Raunson 1024
And whan þis worþi duk haþ þus y-don
He took his oost and home he rit anon
With laurer corouned as a conquerour
And þere he lyueþ in ioye and in hono*ur* 1028
Terme of his lif what neede þ wordes mo
And in a tour in angwissh and in woo.
Dwellen þis Palamon and eek Arcite
ffor euere more þer may no gold hem quite 1032
This passeþ ȝeer by yer and day by day

Til it fel oones in a morwe of May
That Emely þat fairer was to seene
Than is þe lilye vpon his stalke grene 1036
And freisscher þan þe may wiþ floures newe
ffor wiþ þe rose colour strof hir hewe /
I not which was þe fairer of hem tuo
Er it were day as was hire wone to do 1040
Sche was arisen and al redy dight
ffor May wil haue no sluggardie on nigħt [leaf 15, back]
The seson prikeþ euery gentil herte /
And makeþ it out of his sleep to sterte 1044
And siþen arise and don may obs*er*uance
This makeþ Emelye to haue rememb*ra*nce
To don honour to May and for to rise
I-cloþed was sche freissh for to deuyse 1048
Hir yelow her was broyded in a tresse
By-hinde hir bak a yerde long I gesse
And in þe gardyn atte sonne vpriste
Sche walkeþ vp and doun and as hir liste 1052
Sche gadreth floures party whit / and reede /
To make a sotyl garland for hir heede
And as an angel heuenysshely sche song
The grete tour þat was so þikke and strong 1056
Which of þe Castelł was þe chief dongeoñ
Ther as þe knightes weren in prisoñ
Of which I tolde ȝou and telle schal
Was euen ioynant to þe gardein wal 1060
Ther as þis Emely had hir pleying
Bright was þe sonne and cler in þat mornyng
And Palamon þis woful prisoner
As was his wone by leue of his gailler 1064
Was risen and romed in a chambre on heigħ
In which he al þe noble cite seigħ
And ek þe gardyn ful of branches grene
Ther as þe freisshe Emely þe schene 1068
Was in hir walk and romed vp and doun

This sorwful prisoner this Palamo*un*
Goþ in þe chambre Romynge to and fro
And to himself compleignyng of his wo 1072
That he was born ful ofte seide allas
And so byfell by auenture or caas
That þorugh a wyndow þikke of many a barre
Of yren gret and square as any sparre 1076
He cast his eyghen vpon Emelya
And þer with al he bleynt and cryed a [leaf 16]
As þoughh he stongen were vnto þe herte
And with þat crye Arcite anon vp sterte / 1080
And seide Cosyn myn what eyleþ þe
That art so pale and dedly on to se
Why crydestow who haþ þe don offence
ffor goddes loue tak al in pacience 1084
Oure p*ri*soun for it may non oþer be
ffortune haþ yiue vs þis aduersite
Som wicke aspect or disposicioñ
Of Saturne by som constollacioñ 1088
Haþ ȝiuen vs þis al þough we had it sworn
So stood þe heuen whan þat we ware born
We mote endure it þis is schort and playn
This Palamon answerd and seide again / 1092
Cosyn for soþe of þis opynioñ
Þou hast a vain Imaginacioñ
This p*ri*soñ causede me nought to crie
But I was hurt right now þoroughh out myn yhe 1096
In to myn hert þat wol my bane be
The fayrnesse of þat lady þat I see
Ȝonde in the gardyn rome to and fro
Is cause of al my crying and my wo 1100
I not wher sche be wo*m*man or goddesse
But Venus is it soþly as I gesse
And þer with al on knees a doun he fille
And seyde Venus if it be þy wille 1104
yow in þis gardeyn þus to t*ra*nsfigure

Byfore me sorwful wrecched creature
Out of þis prisoñ help þat we mowe scape
And if so be oure destenye be schape/ 1108
By eterne world to deyen in p*r*isoñ.
Of oure lynage haue som compassioñ
That is so lowe y-brought by tyrannie
And with þat word Arcite gan aspye 1112
Wher as þis lady romed to and fro
And with þat sight hir beaute hurt him so [leaf 16, back]
That if þat Palamon was wounded sore
Arcite is hurt as muche as he or more / 1116
And with a syke he seyde pitously
The freissche beaute sleþ me sodeinly
Of hire þat rometh in þe yonder place
And but I haue hir mercy and hir grace 1120
That I may seen hir atte leste wey
I nam but ded þer nys no more to sey
This Palamon whan he þis wordes herde
Dispitously he loked and answerde 1124
Whe*þer* seistow þis in ernest or in pleye
Nay q*uo*d Arcite in ernest by my feye
God helpe me so me lust ful yuel playe
This Palamon gar kne his browes twaye 1128
It were to þe quoa he no gret honour
ffor to be fals ne for to be traytour
To me þat am þi cosyn and þi broþer
y-sworn ful deepe and ech of vs til oþer 1132
That neuer for to deyen in þe payn
Til þat þe deþ departe schal vs twayn
Neither in loue for to hinder oþer
Ne in non oþer cas my lieue broþer 1136
But þat þou scholdest trewly forþer more
In euery caas and I schal forþre þe þore
This was þin oþ and myn also certeine
I wot right wel þou darst it not wiþ-seyne 1140
Thus art þou of my counseil out of doute

And now þou woldest falsly ben aboute
To loue my lady whom I loue and serue
And euer schal til þat myn herte steruc 1144
Now certes fals Arcite þou schalt not so
I loued hir first and tolde þe my wo
As to my counseil and my broþer sworn
To forthre me as I haue told biforn 1148
ffor which þou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpe me if it lay in thy might [leaf 17]
Or elles art þou fals I dar wel sayn
This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn 1152
Thou schalt quod he be raþer fals þan I
But þou art fals I telle þe witterly
¶ ffor p*ar*amour I loued hir first er þou
What wilt þou seyn þou wist it nought yit now 1156
Wheþur sche be a wo*m*man or goddesse
Thin is affeccioñ of holynesse
And myn is loue as to a creature
ffor which I tolde þe myn auenture 1160
As to my cosyn and to my broþer sworn
I pose þat þou louedest hire biforn
Wostow nought wel þe olde clerkes sawe 1163
That who schal ȝiue a louer eny lawe ¶ Quis lege*m* dat amantib*us*.
loue is a gretter lawe by my pan
Than may be yeue to eny erthly man
And þerfore positif lawe and such decree
Is broke alday for loue in eche degree 1168
A man moot needes loue maugre his hede
He may not fleen hit þough he scholde be dede
Al be sche mayde or wydow or elles wif
And eek it is not likly al þi lif 1172
To stonden in hir grace namore schal I
ffor wel þou wost þi selue verreily
That þou and I ben dampned to prisoñ
P*er*petuelly vs gaigneth no Ramsoñ 1176
We stryuen now as houndes for þe bon

They fought alday and ȝet here part was non
Ther com a kyte whil þat þei were so wroþe
That bar a way þe bon bytwixe hem boþe 1180
Ak þerfore atte kinges court my broþer
Ech man for him self þer is non oþer
Loue if þou list for I loue and ay schal
A soothly leue broþer þis is al 1184
Her in þis prisoñ mote we endure
And euerich of vs take his auenture [leaf 17, back]
Gret was þe strif and long bitwix hem tweye
If þat I hadde leyser for to seie / 1188
But to þis effect it happed on a day
To telle it ȝou as schortly as I may
A worþi duk þat highte P*er*otheus
That felawe was vnto duk Theseus 1192
Syn þilke day þat þai were children lite
Was come to Athenes his felawe to visite
and for to pleye as he was wont to do
ffor in þis world he loued noman so 1196
And he loued him als tendurly agayn
So wel þei loued as olde bokes sayn
That whan þat oon was ded soþly to telle /
his felaw went and sought him doun in helle 1200
But of þat story list me nought to write
Duk P*er*otheus louede wel arcite
And had him knowe at Thebes þer be yere
And finally at request and preyere 1204
Of P*er*otheus wiþoute ony Raunsoñ
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoñ
ffrely to gon wher þat him list ouer al
In such a gise as I ȝou telle schal 1208
This was þe forward pleinly for tendite /
Bitwixe Theseus and him Arcite
That if so were þat arcite were founde /
Euer in his lif by day or night or stounde 1212
In eny contre of þis Theseus

And he were caught it was accorded þus
That with a swerd he scholde leese his heed
Ther was noon oþer remedie ne reed 1216
But takeþ his leeue and homward he him spedde
Lat him be war his nekke liþ to wedde
How gret a sorwe suffreþ now arcite
The deth he feeleþ þurgh his herte smyte 1220
He wepeþ . weyleth . crieþ pitously
To sleen himself he wayteþ priuely [leaf 18]
He seide allas þat day þat I was born
Now is my prisoñ worse þan biforn 1224
Now is me schape eternaly to dwelle
Nought in Purgatori but in helle
Allas þat euer I knew P*er*otheus
ffor elles hadde I haue dwelled with Theseus 1228
I-fetered in his prisoñ eueremo
Thanne hadde I ben in blisse and not in woo
Only þe sight of hire whom þat I serue
þoughh þat I neuer hire grace may deserue 1232
Wolde haue y-suffised right ynoughh for me
¶ Oo deere Cosyn Palamon q*uo*d he
Thin is þe victorie of þis auenture
fful blissefully in prisoñ might þou dure 1236
In p*ri*soun certes nay but paradys
Wel haþ fortune torned þe þe dys
That hast þe sight of hire and I þabsence /
ffor possible is syn þou hast hir p*re*sence 1240
And art a knight a worþi and an able
That by som caas syn fortune is chañgeable
Thou maist somtyme to þi desir atteyne
But I þat am exiled and bareyne 1244
Of alle grace and in so gret despeire
That þer nys erþe water fyr ne eyre
Ne creature þat of hem maked is /
That may me helpe or don confort in þis 1248
Wel ought I sterue in wanhope and distresse

ffare wel my lif' my lust' and my gladnesse
Allas why pleynen men so in comune
Of purueance of' god or of' fortune 1252
That' ȝiueth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
Wel bet' þan þey can hemself' deuyse
Som man desireþ for to haue richesse
That' cause is of' his mordre or gret' seknesse / 1256
And som wolde out' of' his prisoñ fain
That' in his hous is of' his meyne slain / [leaf 18, back]
Infinite harmes ben in þis matiere
We wot' not' what' þing' þat' we preyen heere / 1260
We faren as he þat' dronken is as Mous
A dronke man wot' wel he haþ an hous
But' he not' which þe righte weie is þider
And to a dronke man þe weye is slider 1264
And certes in þis world so faren we
We seeken fast' after felicite
But' we gon wrong' ful ofte trewely
Thus may we seyn all and namlich I 1268
That' wende and hadde a gret' opynioñ
That' if I mighte skapen fro p*ri*soñ
Than hadde I ben in ioye and p*ar*fyt' hele
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele 1272
Syn þat' I may not' seen ȝou Emelye
I am but' ded þer nys no remedye
vpon þat' oþer syde Palamon
Whan þat' he wiste þat' arcite was gon 1276
Swich sorwe he makeþ þat' þe grete tour
Resouneþ of' his yollyng' and clamour
The pure fettres of' his schynes grete
Were of' his bittre salte teeres wete 1280
Allas q*uo*d he arcita cosyn myn
Of' all our strif' god wot' þe fruyt' is þin
Thou walkest' now in Thebes at' þi large
And of' my woo þou yernest' litel charge 1284
Thou maist' syn þou hast' wisdom and manhede

Assemble aꝗ þe folk of oure kinrede
And make a werre so scharp on þis Cite
That by som auenture or som tretee 1288
Thou maist haue hir to lady and to wif /
ffor whom þat I most needes leese my lif
ffor as by weie of possibilite
Sitthe þou art at þi large of prisoñ fre 1292
And art a lord gret is þin auantage .
More þan is myn þat sterue her in a kage [leaf 19]
ffor I mot weepe and wayle whil þat I lyue
With aꝗ þe woo þat prisoñ may me ȝiue 1296
And eek with peyne þat loue me yiueþ also
That doubleþ al my torment and my wo
Ther with þe fyr of gelousie vpsterte
With Inne his brest and hente him by þe herte 1300
So woodly þat he lik was to byholde
The boxtre or þe asshen deed and colde
Than seide he o cruel goddes þat gouerne
This world with bynding of your word eterne 1304
And writen in þe table of athamaunt
youre p*ar*lement and ȝour eterne g*ra*unt
What is mankynde more vnto ȝou holde
Than is þe scheep þat roukeþ in þe folde 1308
ffor slain is man right as anoþer beeste
And dwelleþ eek in p*ri*soñ and in arreste
And haþ siknesse and gret aduersite
And ofte tymes gilteles p*ar*de 1312
¶ What gouernance is in þis prescience
That gilteles tormenteþ Innocence
And encreseth þis is al my penau*n*ce
That man is bounden to his obs*er*uau*n*ce 1316
ffor goddes sake to letten of his wille
Ther as a beeste may aꝗ his lust fulfill*e*
And whan a beeste is ded he haþ no peyne
But after his deth þe man mot weepe *and* pleyne 1320
Though in þis world he haue care and wo

Wiþouten doute it may stonden so
The answere of þis lete I to diuines
But wel I wot þat in þis world gret pyne is 1324
Allas I see a *ser*pent or a þeef
That many a trewe man haþ do meschief
Gon at his large and wher him list may turne
But I moot ben in p*ri*sonn̄ þurgh̄ Saturne 1328
And eek þurgh Iuno Ialous and eek wood
That haþ destroyed wel neyh al þe blood [leaf 19, back]
Of Thebes with his waste walles wide
And venus sleeþ me on þat oþer syde 1332
ffor Ialousye and fere of him Arcite
¶ Now wil I stynte of Palamon alite
And lat him in his prisonn̄ stille dwelle
And of Arcite forþ I wil ȝou telle 1336
The somer passeþ and þe nightes longe
Encresceth double wise þe peynes stronge
Boþe of þe louer and of þe prisoner
I not which haþ þe wofuller myster 1340
ffor schortly for to sein of Palamon
P*er*petuelly is dampned to prison
In cheynes and in fettres to þe ded
And arcite is exiled vp his hed 1344
ffor euermore as out of þat contre
Ne neuer he ne schal his lady se
¶ yow louers aske I now þis questionn̄
Who haþ þe wors arcite or Palamōn 1348
That oon may seen his lady day by day
But in prisonn̄ moot he duellen ay
That oþer wher him list may ride or go
But seen his lady schal he neuer mo 1352
Now diuineth as ȝou list þat ȝe can
ffor I wol telle forth as I bigan

[*No gap in the MS.*]

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[*PART II. No gap in the MS.*]

Whan þat arcite to Thebes comen was
fful ofte a day he swelte and saide allas 1356
ffor seen his lady schal he neuere mo
And schortly to concluden al his wo
So mochel sorwe hadde neuer creature
That is or schal whil þat þe world may dure 1360
His sleep . his mete . his drink is him by-raft
That lene he wex and drye as is a schaft
His yghen holwe grisly to biholde
His hewe falwe and pale as ayssche colde 1364
And solitarie he was and euer allone
And waylyng al þe night makyng his mone [leaf 20]
And if he herde song or instrument
Than wolde he weepe he mighte nought be stent 1368
So feble were his spiritz and he lowe
And chaunged so þat no man couþe knowe
His speche noþer his voys þough men it herde
And in his gere for al þe world he ferde / 1372
Not comly lyk to louers maladye
Of heres but raþer lik manye
Engendred of humo*ur* malencolik
Biforn his celle fantastik 1376
And schortly torned was al vp and doun
Boþe habite and disposicio*u*n
Of him þis woful louere daun arcite
What scholde I alday of his woo endite 1380
Whan he endured hadde a ȝeer or tuo
This cruel torment and þis peyne and woo
At Thebes in his contre as I seyde
Vpon a night in sleep as he him leyde 1384
Him þoughte þat þe wengede god mercurie
Biforn him stood and bad him to be merie
His sleepy ȝerde in honde he bar vpright
An hatte he wered vppon his heeres bright 1388

Arrayed was þis god as he took keepe
As he was whan þat argus took his sleepe
And seyde him þus to Athenes schalt þou wende
Ther is þe schapen of þi wo an ende 1392
And with þat word arcite wook and sterte
Now trewely how sore þat me smerte
Quod he to Athenes right now wol I fare
Ne for þe drede of deþ schal I nought spare 1396
To see my lady þat I loue and serue /
In hire presence I ne recche nouȝt to sterue /
And with þat word he caughte a gret mirour
And saugh þat chaunged was al his colour 1400
And saugh his visage al in anoþer kinde
And right anon it ran him in his mynde [leaf 20, back]
Than siþen his face was so disfigured
Of maladie þe which he hadde endured 1404
He mighte wel if þat he bar him lowe
Lyue in Athenes eueremore vnknowe /
And seen his lady wel neigh day by day
And right anon he changed his array 1408
And cladde him as a poure laborer
And al allone saf oonly a squier
That knew his priuete and al þe caas
Which was desgised pouerly as he was 1412
To Athenes is he gon þe nexte way
And to þe courte he wente vpon a day
And atte gate he profred his seruise
To drugge and drawe what so men wol deuise 1416
And schortly of þis matier for to sein
He fille in office with a chamburlein /
The which þat was dwellyng with Emelye
ffor he was wys and sone couþe aspye 1420
Of eu*e*ry s*er*uant which þat serueþ here
Wel couþe he hewen woode and water bere
ffor he was yong and mighty for þe nones
And þerto he was strong and bigge of bones 1424

To doon þat eny wight him can deuyse
A yeer or tuo he was in þis seruise
Page of þe Chambre of Emelye þe brighte
And Philostrat he seyde þat he highte 1428
¶ But half so wel byloued aman as he
Ne was þer neuer in court of his degre
He was so gentil of condicio*un*
That þurgh out al the court was his reno*un* 1432
Thei seide þat it were a charite
That Theseus wolde enhaunce his degre
And putten him in worschipful seruise
Ther þat he mig̃ht his vertu excercise 1436
And þus withinne a while his name is spronge
Boþe of his deedes and of his goode tonge [leaf 21]
That Theseus haþ taken him so neere
That of his Chambre he made him a squiere 1440
And gaf him golde to mayntene his degre
And eek men brought him out of his contre
ffro ȝeer to ȝeer ful priuily his rente
But honestly and sleighly he it spente 1444
That no man wondred how þat he it hadde
And þre ȝeer in þis wise his lif he ladde
And bar him so in pees and eek in werre
Ther was no man þat Theseus haþ derre 1448
And in þis blisse lete I now arcite
And speke I wol of Palamon alite
¶ In derknesse and horrible and strong p*ri*sõn
This seuene ȝeer haþ seten Palamõ 1452
fforpyned what for woo and for distresse
Who feleth double sore and heuynesse
But Palamon þat loue drencheþ so /
That wood out of his wit he goþ for wo 1456
And eek þer to he is a prisoner
P*er*petuelly not oonly for a ȝeer
Who couþe ryme in englissh p*ro*purly
His martirdom for soþe it am not I 1460

Ther fore I passe als lightly as I may
¶ It felle þat in þe seuenþe ȝer of may
The þridde night as olde bokes sein /
That als þis storie telleþ more plein 1464
Were it by auenture or destinee
As whan a þing is schape it schal be
That sone after þe mydnyght Palamon
By helpyng of a frende brak prisoñ 1468
And fleþ þe cite faste as he may goo
ffor hadde yeue his gailler drunke soo
Of a clarre maad of a certeyn wyn
With nercotiks and opie of Thebes fyn 1472
That al þat night þough þat men wolde him schake
Tbe gailler sleep he mighte not awake [leaf 21, back]
And þus he fleeth as fast as euer he may
The night was schort and faste by þe day 1476
That needes cost he most himseluen hyde
And til a groue faste þer bisyde
With dredful foot þan stalkeþ Palamon
ffor schortly þis was his opinion 1480
That in þat groue he wolde him hide alday
And in þe night þan wolde he take his way
To Thebes-ward his frendes for to pray
On Theseus to helpe him to werray 1484
And schortly ouþer he wolde leese his lif
Or wynnen Emely to his louely wif /
This is þeffecte and his entente playn
¶ Now wol I torne vnto arcite agayn 1488
That litel wiste how neih þat was his care
Til þat fortune hadde kaught him in his snare
The besy larke messanger of day
Saluеth in hir song þe morwe gray 1492
And fyry phebus riseþ vp so bright
That al þe orient laugheth of þe light
And with his streemes drieth in þe greues
The seluir dropes hangyng in þe leeues 1496

And Arcita in þe court roial
Wiþ Theseus his squier principal
Is rysen and lokeþ on þe mery day
And for to doon his obseruance to may 1500
Remembryng on þe poynt of his desir
He on his courser stertyng as þe fir
Is riden in to þe feeldes him to pleye
Out of þe court were it a myle or tweye 1504
And to þe groue of which þat I ȝou tolde
By auenture his weye he gan to holde /
To maken him a garland of þe greues
Were it of woodebynde or hawethorne leeues 1508
And loude he song aȝein þe sonne scheene /
May with all þi floures whit and grene [leaf 22]
Welcome be þou faire freisshe may
I hope þat I som grene gete may 1512
And from his courser with a lusty herte
In to þe groue ful hastily he sterte
And in a path he rometh vp and doun
Ther as by auenture of þis Palamon 1516
Was in a busshe þat no man mighte him see
fful sore aferd of his deth was he
No þing ne knewe he þat it was arcite
God wot he wolde haue trowed it ful lite 1520
But soþ is seide go siþþen many ȝeeres
That feeld haþ yhen and þe woode haþ eeres
It is ful fair a man to bere him euene /
ffor alday meeteþ men at vnsett steuene 1524
fful litel woot arcite of his felawe
That was so neigh to herken of his sawe
ffor in þe busshe he sitteþ now ful stille
Whan þat arcite hadde Romed all his fille 1528
And songen al þe Roundel lustily
In to a studie he fel sodeinly
As doon þese louers in here queynte geeres
Now in þe croppe and now doun in þe breeres 1532

Now vp now doun as boket in a welle
Right as þe friday soþly for to telle
Now it schineþ and now it reyneþ faste
Right so gan gery venus ouer caste 1536
The hertes of hir folk right as hire day
Is geerful right so chaungeþ sche array
Seelde is þe fryday al þe wike y-like
¶ Whan þat arcite hadde songe he gan to syke 1540
And sette him doun wiþouten eny more
Allas quod he þat day þat I was bore
How longe Iuno þurgh þi cruelte
Wiltow werreien Thebes þe Cite 1544
Allas y-brought is to confusioñ
The blood Roial of Cadme and Amphioñ [leaf 22, back]
Of Cadmus which þat was þe ferste man
That Thebes bult or first þe toun bigan 1548
And of þe cite first was crouned king
Of his lynage am I and his ofspring
By verray ligne as of þe stok roiall
And now I am so caytif and so prall 1552
That he þat is my mortel enemy
I serue him as his squier pouerly
And ȝit doþ me Iuno wel more schame
ffor I dar nought biknowe myn owne name 1556
But þer as I was wont to hight arcite
Now highte I Philostrate nought worþ a myte
Allas þou felle mars allas þou Iuno
Thus haþ your ire oure lignage al fordo 1560
Saf only me and wrecched Palamon
That Theseus martireþ in prisoñ
And ouer al þis to slen me vtterly
loue haþ his faire dart so brennyngly. 1564
y-stiked þurgh my trewe carful herte
That schapen was my deþ arst þan my scherte
ye sleen me with ȝour eyȝen emelye
ȝe ben þe cause wher fore þat I dye 1568

Of alt þe remanant / of myn oþer care
Ne sette I nought þe montance of a tare
So þat I coude don aught to ȝoure plesance
And with þat word he fel doun in a traunce 1572
A long tyme and aftirward he vpsterte
This Palamon þat þought þat þorugh his herte
he felte a cold swerd sodeinliche glyde
ffor yre he quok no lenger wolde he byde 1576
And whan þat he had herd Arcites tale
As he were wood with face deed and pale
he sterte him vp out of þe buskes þikke
And seide arcite false traytour wikke 1580
Now art þou hent þat louest my lady so
ffor whom þat I haue al þis peyne and wo [leaf 23]
And art my blood and to my counseil sworn
As I ful ofte haue told þe heer biforn 1584
And hast be-iaped here duk Theseus /
And falsly chaunged hast þi name þus
I wol be ded or elles þou schalt dye
Thou schalt not loue my lady Emelye 1588
But I wol loue hire oonly and nomo
ffor I am Palamon þi mortel foo
And þough þat I no wepene haue in þis place
But out of p*ri*soun am astert by grace 1592
I drede nought þat ouþer þou schalt die
Or þou ne schalt not louen Emelye
Chees which þou wilt or þou schalt not asterte
This arcite with ful despitous herte 1596
When he him knew and hadde his tale herde
As fers as a leon̄ pulled out a swerde
And seide þus by god þa[t] sitteþ aboue
Nere it were þat þou art sike and wood for loue 1600
And eek þat þou no wepne hast in þis place /
Thou schuldest neuer out of þis groue pace
That þou ne schuldest deyen of myn honde
ffor I diffie þe sewrte and þe bonde 1604

Which þat þou seist I haue maad to þe /
What verray fool þink weel þat loue is fre
And I wol loue hir maugre al þy might
But for as moche þou art a worþy knight 1608
And willest to derreyne hir by batayle
Haue her my trouþe to morwe I wol nought fayle
Wiþouten wityng of eny oþer wight
That heer I wol be founden as a knight 1612
And bringen herneys right ynough for þe
And chese þe beste and lef þe worste for me
And mete and drynk þis night wol y bringe
ynough for þe and cloþes for þi beddynge 1616
And if so be þat þou my lady wynne
And sle me in þis woode þer I am Inne [leaf 23, back]
Thou mayst wel haue þy lady as for me
This Palamon answerd I graunt it þe 1620
And þus þei ben departed til a morwe
Whan ech of hem hadde leyd his feiþ to borwe
Occupied out of alle charite
O regne þat wolde no felawe haue with þe 1624
fful soþ is seid þat loue ne lorschipe
Wol not his þankes haue no felaschipe
We fynde þat of arcite and of Palamon
Arcite is riden anon in to þe toun 1628
And on the morwe er it were dayes light
fful priuely tuo herneys haþ he dight
Boþe sufficant and meete to darreyne
The batail in þe feld bitwix hem tweyne 1632
And on his hors allone as he was borne
He carieth al his harneys him biforne
And in þe groue at tyme and place y-set
This arcite and þis Palamon ben mette 1636
To changen gan þe colour in hire face
Right as þe hunters in þe Reigne of trace
That stondeþ atte gappe with a spere
Whan hunted is þe leoun or þe bere 1640

And heereþ him come russhyng in þe greeues
And bereþ boþe bowes and þe leeues /
And þinkeþ here comeþ my mortel enemy
Wiþoute faile he moot be deed or I 1644
ffor eiþer I mot sleen him atte gappe
Or he mot slee me if þat me mys happe
So ferden þei in chaungyng of here hewe
As fer as euerich of hem oþer knewe / 1648
Ther nas no good day ne no saluynge /
But streit wiþouten word or rehersynge /
Euerich of hem hilp for to arme oþer
As freendly as he were his owne broþer 1652
And after þat wiþ scharpe speres stronge /
They foynen ech at oþer wonder longe [leaf 24]
Thou mightest wene þat þis Palamon
In his fightinge were a wood leon̄ 1656
And as a cruel tigre was arcite
As wilde bores gonne þei to smyte /
That frothen whit as foom for ire wood
Vp to þe ancle foughte þey in here blood 1660
And in þis wise I lete hem fightyng dwelle
And forþ I wole of Theseus you telle
The destenye Ministre general
That executeþ in þe world ouer al 1664
The purueance þat god haþ seie bifore
So strong it is þat þei þe world hadde it swore
The contraire of a þing by ȝe or nay
ȝet som tyme it schal falle on a day 1668
Þat falleþ nought eft wiþinne a þousend ȝere
ffor certeinly oure appetites heere
Be it of werre or pees or hate or loue
Al is þis reuled by þe sight aboue 1672
This mene I now by mighty Theseus
That for to hunte is so desirous
And namly atte grete hert in may
That in his bedde þer daweþ him no day 1676

That he nys cladde and redy for to ride
Wiþ hunte and horn and houndes him besyde
ffor in his huntyng haþ he such delit
That it is all his ioye and appetyt 1680
To ben himself þe grete hertes bane
ffor after mars he serueth now Diane
Cler was þe day as I haue told er þis
And Theseus with alle ioye and blys 1684
With his ypolita þe faire queene
And Emelye cloþed al in greene
On huntyng ben þei riden really
And to þe groue þat stood ful faste by 1688
In which þer was an hert as men him tolde
Duk Theseus þe streighte wey haþ holde / [leaf 24, back]
And to þe lannde he rideþ him ful righte
ffor þider was þe hert wont to haue his flighte 1692
And ouer a brook and so forþ on his wey
This Duk wol haue a cours at him or twey
Wiþ houndes swich as þat him list to comaunde /
And whan þis Duk was come vnto þe launde 1696
vnder þe sonne he loked and anon
He was war of arcite and Palamon
That foughten breeme as it were boles tuo
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro 1700
So hidously þat with þe leste strook
It semeþ þat it wolde felle an ook
But what þei were noþing he ne woot
This duk his courser with his spores smot 1704
And at a stert he was betwixe hem tuo
And pulled out a swerd and cried ho
No more vp peyne of lesyng of ȝour hed
By mighty mars he schal anon be ded 1708
That smyteth eny strok þat I may seen
But telleþ me what myster men ȝe ben
That ben so hardy for to fighten heere
Wiþoute Iuge or oþer officere 1712

As it' were in a litell liste really
¶ This Palamon answerde hastily
And seide sire what' needeþ wordes mo
We haue þe deþ deserued boþe tuo 1716
Tuo woful wrecches be we tuo caytyues
That' ben encombred of' oure owne lyues
And as þou art' a rightful lord and Iuge
Ne ȝiue us neyþer mercy ne refuge 1720
But' slee me first' for seinte charite
But' slee my felawe eek' as wel as me
Or slee him [first] for þough þou knowest' it lite
This is þi mortel fo þis is arcite 1724
That' fro þi lond is banyssched on his heede
ffor which he haþ deserued to be ded [leaf 25]
ffor þis is he þat com vnto þi gate
And seyde þat' he highte Philostrate 1728
Thus haþ he Iaped þe ful many a ȝeere /
And þou hast' maked him þi cheef' squiere
And þis is he þat' loueþ Emelye
ffor siþ þat' day is come þat' I schal dye 1732
I make pleynly my confessiõ
That' I am þilke woful Palamon
That' haþ þi p*ri*sõ broke wikkedely
I am þi mortel foo *and* it' am I 1736
That' loueþ so hote Emelya þe bright[e]
That' I wol dye p*re*sent' in hir sighte
Wher fore I axe deþ and my Iuwise
But sle my felawe in þe same wise 1740
ffor boþe haue we deserued to be slayn
¶ This worþi duk' answerde anon agayn
And seide þis is a schort' conclusioun
your owne mouþ be ȝoure confessio*u*n 1744
Haþ dampned ȝou and I wol it recorde
It' needeþ nought' to pyne ȝou with þe corde
ye schal be ded by mighty mars þe reede
The queen anon for verrey wo*m*manhede 1748

Com for to wepe and so dide Emelye
And alle þe ladies of þe compaignye
Gret pite was it as it þoughte hem alle
That euer such a chaunce schulde falle 1752
ffor gentil men þei were of gret estat
And noþing but for loue was þis debat
And saugh hire bloody woundes wide and sore
And alle cryeden boþe lasse and more 1756
Haue mercy lord vpon vs wommen alle
And on here bare knees doun þei falle
And wolde haue kist his feet þer as he stood
Til atte last aslaked was his mood 1760
ffor pite renneþ sone in gentil herte /
And þough he first for Ire quook and sterte [leaf 25, back]
he haþ considered schortly in a clause
The trespas of hem bothe and eek þe cause 1764
And al þough þat his Ire hire gilt accused
ȝit in his resoñ he hem boþe excused
As þus he þoughte wel þat euery man
Wil helpe himself in loue if þat he can 1768
And eek deliuere himself out of prisoñ
And eek his herte hadde compassioñ
Of wommen for þey wepen euer in oon
And in his gentil herte he þought anon 1772
And softe vnto himself he seide fy
vpon a lord þat wol haue no mercy
But be a leoñ boþe in word and dede /
To hem þat ben in repentance and drede 1776
As wel as to a proud dispitous man
That wol maintene þat he first bigan
That lord haþ litel of discrecioñ
That in such cas can no diuisioñ 1780
But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon
And schortly whan his Ire is þus goon
he gan to loken vp with eyghen light
And spak þis same wordes al on hight 1784

¶ The god of loue a benedicite
How mighty and how gret a lord is he
Azeins his might þer gayneþ non obstacles
He may be cleped a god of his miracles 1788
ffor he can maken at his owne gise
Of euerich herte as þat him list deuise
lo her þis arcite and þis Palamon
That quytly were out of my prisoun 1792
And might haue lyued in Thebes rially
And witen I am here mortel enemy
And þat here deþ lith in my might also /
And zit haþ loue maugre here yghen tuo 1796
Brought hem hider boþe for to deye
Now lokeþ is not þat an heih folye [leaf 26]
¶ Who may ben a fool but if he loue
Byhold for goddes sake þat sitteþ aboue 1800
See how þai bleede be þai not wel arrayed
Thus haþ hire lord þe god of loue y-paized
Hire wages and hire fees for hire seruise
And zit þei wenen for to ben ful wise 1804
That seruen loue for aught þat may bifall
But þis is zet þe beste game of all
That sche for wham þei haue þis iolyte
Can hem þerfore as moche thank as me 1808
Sche woot na more of all þis hoote fare
By god þan woot a Cockow of an hare
But al moot ben assayed hoot and colde
A man moot ben a fool or zong or olde 1812
I wot it by my self ful yore agon
ffor in my tyme a seruant was I on
And þerfore syn I knowe of loues peyne
And woot how sore it can a man distreyne 1816
As he þat hath ben caught often in his laas
I you forziue al holly þis trespas
At þe requeste of þe queen þat kneeleþ heere
And eek of Emelye my soster deere 1820

And ȝe schal boþe anon vnto me swere
That neuere ȝe schal my coroune dere
Ne make werre vpon me night ne day
But ben my frendes in alle þat ȝe may 1824
I ȝou forȝiue þis trespas euery del
And þey him sworen his axing fair and wel
And him of lordschipe and of mercy preide
And he hem graunteþ grace and þus he seide 1828
To speke of riaħ lynage and richesse
þough þat sche were a queen or a princesse
Ech of ȝou boþe is worþy douteles
To wedde whan tyme is but naþeles 1832
I speke as for my suster Emelye /
ffor whom ȝe haue þis strif and Ialousie [leaf 26, back]
Ȝe wite ȝoure self sche may not wedde tuo
At oones þough ȝe fighten euermo 1836
That oon of ȝou al be him loþ or leef
He moot go pypen in an yuy leef
This is to sey sche may not haue boþe
Al be ȝe neuer so Ialouse ne so wroþe 1840
And for-þi I ȝou putte in þis degre
That ech of ȝou schal haue his destine
As him is schape and kerkneþ in what wise
Lo heer ȝour ende of þat I schal deuyse / 1844
¶ My wil is þis for plat conclusiõ
Wiþouten eny replicaciõ
If þat ȝow likeþ takeþ it for þe beste /
That euerych of ȝou schal gon wher him leste 1848
ffrely wiþouten Raunceon or daunger
And þis day fifty wykes fer ne neer
Euerich of ȝou schal bringe an hundred knightes
Armed for þe lystes vp al rightes 1852
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataile
And þis biheete I ȝou wiþoute faile
vpon my trouþe and as I am a knight
That wheþer of ȝou boþe þat haþ mighť 1856

This is to sein þat wheþer he or þou
May with his hundred as I spak of now
Sle his contrarie or out of lystes dryue
That schal I ȝiue Emelya to wyue 1860
To whom þat fortune ȝeueþ so fair a grace
The lystes schal I maken in þis place
And god so wisly on my soule rewe
As I schal euen Iugge ben and trewe 1864
ȝe schal non oþer eende wiþ me maken
þat on of ȝou schal ben deed or taken
And if ȝou þinkeþ þis is wel y-sayed
Sey ȝour avys and holdeþ ȝou appaied 1868
This is ȝour ende and ȝour conclusioñ
Who lokeþ lighty now but Palamoñ [leaf 27]
Who springeþ vp for ioye but arcite
Who couþe telle or who couþe it endite 1872
The ioye þat is maked in þe place
Whan Theseus haþ don so fair a grace
But doun on knees went euery maner wight
And þonked him wiþ all here hert and might 1876
And namely þe Thebanes ofte siþe
And þus wiþ good hope and wiþ herte bliþe
They take þeir leue and homward gon þei ride
To Thebes with olde walles wyde 1880

[*PART III. No gap in the MS.*]

I trowe men wold it deme necligence
yf I forȝete te tellen þe dispense
Of Theseus þat goþ so busily
To maken vp þe lystes ryally 1884
That such a noble theatre as it was
I dar wel seyn in þe world þer nas
The circuite a Mile was aboute
Walled of stoon and diched al wiþoute 1888
Round was þe schap in maner of compas

fful of degrees þe heighte of sixty paas
Than whan a man was sette on oo degre
He lettede nought his felawe for to see 1892
Estward þer stood a gate of marbel white
Westward right south anoþer in opposite
And schortly to conclude such a place
Was non in erþe as in so litel a space 1896
ffor in þe lond þer nas no crafty man
That Geometrie or ars metrike can
Ne purtreiour ne keruer of ymages
That Theseus ne gain him mete *and* wages 1900
The Teatre for to make and deuyse
And for to don his rite and sacrifise
he estward hath vpon þe gate aboue
In worschip of Venus þe goddesse of loue 1904
Don make an auter and an oratorie
And of þe westward in memorie [leaf 27, back]
Of Mars he maked hath right such anoþer
That coste largely of gold a foþer 1908
And northward in a toret on þe walle
Of alabaustre whit and reed coralle
An oratori riche for to see
In worschip of Diane of chastite 1912
hath Theseus don wrought in noble wise
But ȝit hadde I forgetyn to deuyse
þe noble peyntyng and þe purtraitures
The schap þe contienance and þe figures 1916
That weren in þise oratories þre
fferst in þe temple of venus maist þou se
Wrought in þe walle ful pitous to biholde
The broken sleepes and þe sikes colde 1920
þe sacrede teeres and þe waymentyng
The fyre strokes of þe desyring
That loues seruantz in þis lijf enduren
The othes þat here couenantz ensuren 1924
Plesant and hope desir fol-hardynesse

Beaute and youþe bauderie Richesse
Charmes and force lesynges flaterie
Dispense bysynesse and Ialousie 1928
That werede of yalow of gooldes a garlond
And a cukkow sittyng on his hond
ffestes instrumentz karoles daunces
lust and array and all þe circumstances 1932
Of loue which þat rekned and rekene schal
By ordre were peynted on þe wal
And mo þan I can make of mencioñ
ffor sothly al þe mont of Citheroñ 1936
Ther venus haþ hir principal dwellyng
Was schewed on þe wal in portreying
Wiþ al þe gardyn and þe lustynesse
Nat was forȝeten þe porter ydelnesse 1940
Ne Narcisus þe faire of yore agon
Ne yet þe folie of king Salomon [leaf 28]
Ne ȝit þe grete strengþe of Hercules
Thenchauntementz of Medea and Circes 1944
Ne of Turnus wiþ þe hardy fiers corrage
The riche Crysus kaytif in seruage /
Thus may ȝe seen þat wisdom ne richesse
Beaute ne sleighte strengþe ne hardynesse / 1948
Ne may wiþ venus holde champ*ar*tye
ffor as hire list þe world þanne may sche gye
lo all þise folk so kaught were in here lace
Til þei for woo ful ofte seyde allase 1952
Suffiseth here ensamples oon or tuo
And þough I couþe rekne a þousand mo
The statue of venus glorious for to see
Was inaked fleetyng in þe large see 1956
And fro þe nauel doun al couered was
Wiþ wawes greene and bright as eny glas
O citole in hir right hond hadde sche /
And on hire heed ful semely for to see 1960
A rose garlond freissch and wel smellynge

Aboue hir heed her doufes flykerynge
Biforn hire stoode hir sone Cupido
vpon his schuldernes wenges hadde he tuo 1964
And blynd he was as it is ofte seene /
A bowe he bar and arwes bright and keene
Whi schulde I nought as wel eek telle þe halle
The purtraiture þat was vpon þe walle / 1968
Wiþinne þe temple of mighty mars þe reede
Al peynted was þe wal in lengþe and brede /
lik to þe eestres of þe grisly place
That highte þe grete temple of Mars in trace 1972
In þilke colde frosty regioun
Ther as Mars haþ his sou*er*aigne mansio*un*
ffirst on þe wal was peynted a foreste
In which þer dwelled neyþer man ne beste 1976
Wiþ knotty knarry bareyne trees olde
Of Stubbes scharpe and hidous to biholde/ [leaf 28, back]
In which þer ran a Rombel in a swough
And þought a storm schulde bresten euery bough 1980
And dounward from an hull vnder a bente
Ther stood þe temple of mars armypotente
Wrought all of burned steel of which þentre
Was long and streyt and gastly for to see 1984
And þer out cam a rage and such a vese
That it made all þe gates for to rese
The northerne light in atte dores schone
ffor wyndowe on þe wall ne was þer none 1988
Thorugh which men mighte eny light discerne
The dores waren all of Atthemant et*er*ne
ychenchede ouertwart and endlong
Wiþ Iren towgh and for to make it strong 1992
Eu*er*y piler þe temple to sustene
Was tonne gret of Iren bright and scheene
Ther say I first þe derk ymagynynge
Of felonye and al þe compassynge 1996
The cruel Ire reed as eny glede

The pykpurs and eek þe pale drede
The smyler wiþ þe knyf vnder þe cloke
The schepene brennyng wiþ þe blake smoke 2000
The tresoun of þe morthering in þe bedde
The open werre wiþ woundes all bibledde
Contek wiþ bloody knyf and scharp manace
Al ful of schrikyng was þat sory place 2004
The sleer of himself yet saugh I þere
His herte hath baþed al his here
The nayl y-dryuen in þe schood on night
The colde deth wiþ mouþ gapende vpright 2008
Amyddes of þe temple sat meschance
With disconfort and sory contenance
yet saugh I woodnesse laughyng in his rage
Armed compleint / out hees and feers outrage 2012
The karoigne in þe busk wiþ þrote y-korue
A þousand y-slayn and nought of qualme y-storue [leaf 29]
The Tiraunt with his preye his force thraste /
The toun destroied þer was noþing lafte 2016
yet saugh I brent þe schippes hoppestereres
The hunte strangled wiþ þe wilde breeres /
The sowe freten þe child right in þe cradel
The Cook I-scalded for al his longe ladel 2020
Nought was forgeten by þe infortune of marte /
The carter ouer-Riden wiþ his carte
vnder þe wheel ful lowe he lay a doun
Ther were also of martis diuisioun 2024
The barbour and þe bocher and þe smith
That forgeþ scharpe swerdes on his stith
And all aboue depeynted in a toure
Saugh I conqueste in gret honoure 2028
With þe scharpe swerd ouer his heed
Hangynge by a subtyl twyned þreed
Depeynted was þe slaughtre of Iulius
Of grete Nero and of Anthonius 2032
Al be þat ilke time þei were vnborn

ȝet was hire deth depeynted þer biforn
By manasyng of mars right by figure
So was it schewed right in þat purtreiture 2036
As is depeynted in þe sertres aboue
Who schal be slain or elles deed for loue
Sufficeþ oon ensample in stories olde
I may not rekne hem alle þough I wolde 2040
The statue of mars vpon a carte stood
Armed and loked grym as he were wood
And ouer his heed þer schineþ tuo figures
Of sterres þat ben closed in scriptures 2044
That oon Puella þat oþer Rubeus
This god of armes was arrayed þus
A wolf þer stood biforn him at his feete
Wiþ eighen reede and of a man he eete 2048
Wiþ subtill penseli was depeynted þis storie /
In redoutyng of mars and of his glorie [leaf 29, back]
Now to þe temple of Diane þe chaste /
As schortly as I can I wol me haste 2052
To telle ȝou all þe discripcio*un*
Depeynted ben þe walles vp and do*un*
Of huntyng and of schamefast chastite
Ther saugh I how woful Calistope 2056
Whan þat Diane agreued was with here
Was torned fro a wom*m*an til a bere / ¶ Vrsa maior
And after was sche maad þe loode-sterre
þus was sche peynted I can ȝou seye no ferre 2060
Hire sone is eek a sterre as men may se
Ther saugh I dane torned til a tree
I mene nat þe goddesse Diane
But Penneus doughter which þat highte Dane 2064
¶ Ther saugh I accheon an herte y-maked
ffor vengance þat he saugh Diane al naked
I saugh how þat his houndes haue him caught/
and freten him for þat þei knewe him naught 2068
yet ypeynted was a litel forþere more /

how atthalance hounted þe wilde bore
And Meliagre and many anoþer mo
ffor which Diane wrought him care and wo 2072
Ther saugh I many anoþer storie /
The which me list nat drawe to memorie /
¶ This goddesse on an hert ful wel hiegh seet
Wiþ smale honndes all aboute hir feet 2076
And vnder neþe hire feet sche hadde a moone
Wexynge it was and schulde wanye soone
In gaude greene hir statue cloþed was
Wiþ bowe in honde and arwes in a caas 2080
Hir eyhen caste sche ful lowe a doun
Ther Pluto haþ his derke regioun
A wo*m*man trauaillynge was hire biforn
But for hire childe so longe was vnborn 2084
fful pitou[s]ly lucyna gan sche calle
And seyde helpe for þou mayst best of alle [leaf 30]
Wel couþe he peynte lifly þat it wrought
Wiþ many a floreyne he þe hewes bought 2088
Now ben þise listes maad an Theseus
That at his grete cost arraied thus
The temples and þe Theatres euerydel
Whan it was don him liked wonder wel 2092
¶ But stynte I wol of Theseus alite
And speke of Palamon and of arcite
The day approcheþ and hir retornynge
That eueriche scholde an hundred knightes bringe 2096
The bataille to darrayne as I ȝou tolde
And til athenes hire couenant for to holde
Haþ eu*er*ych of hem brought an .C. knightes
Wel armed for þe werre at alle rightes 2100
And sikerly þer trowed many a man
That neuer siþþen þat þe world bigan
That for to speke of knighthode of here hond
As ferre as god haþ maked see or lond 2104
Nas of so fewe so noble a companye

ffor euery wigħt þat loued chiualrie
And wolde his þankes haue a passant name
Haþ preyed þat he mighte ben of þat game 2108
A wel was him þat þer to chosen was /
ffor if þer fille to morwe such a caas
ȝe knowe wel þat euery lusty knight
That loueþ paramours and haþ his mighť 2112
Were it in Ingelond or elles where
Thei wolde here þankes wilnen to be þere
To fighte for a lady benedicite
It were a lusty sighte for to see 2116
And right so ferden þey with Palamon
With him þer wente knightes many on
Som wol ben armed in an habergeon
And in a brest plate and in a light Iepon 2120
And some wol haue a paire plates large
And som wil haue a pruce scheld or a targe [leaf 30, back]
Som wol ben armed on his legges wel
and haue an axe and som a mace of steel 2124
Ther nys no newe gyse þat it nas olde
Armed were þei as I haue ȝou tolde
Euerich after his opynioun
Ther maystow see comyng wiþ Palamoñ 2128
ligurge himself þe grete king of trace
Blak was his berd and manly was his face
The cercles of his yhen in his heede
Thei gloweden bitwixe yelow and rede 2132
And lik a griffoñ loked he aboute
With kempe heres on his browes stoute
his lymes grete his braunes harde and strong
his schuldernes brode his armes round and long 2136
And as þe gyse was in his cuntre
fful heighe vpon a chaar of gold stood he
Wiþ foure white boles in þe trays
In stede of cote armour ouer his harnays 2140
Wiþ nayles yelowe and bright as eny golde

he hadde a berskynne coleblak^t for olde
his longe her was kembed byhynde his bak^t
As eny rauenes feþer it^ schon for blak^t 2144
A wreþe of^t gold arme gret^t of^t huge weighte
vpon his heed sette ful of^t stones brighte
Of fyne Rubies and of^t Diamantz
Aboute his chaar þer wente wit^t Alantz 2148
Twenty and mo as gret as eny steere
To hunten atte leon̄ or þe deere
And folwed him with mosel fast^t y-bounde
Coleres of^t gold and torettes filed rounde 2152
An C. lordes hadde he in his route
Armed ful wel wiþ hertes sterne and stoute
¶ With arcita in stories as men fynde
The grete Emetreus þe king^t of^t Inde 2156
vpon a steede bay trapped in steel
Couered in cloth of^t gold diapred weel [leaf 31]
Com ridyng^t lyk^t þe god of armes mars
His cote armure was of^t cloþ of^t Tars 2160
Couched with perles whit^t and round and grete /
His sadel was of^t brent gold newe I bete
A mantelet^t vpon his schulderñ hangynge
Bret^t ful of^t Rubyes reede as fyr sparclynge 2164
His crispe her lik^t rynges was I-ronne
And þat^t was yelow and glitering^t as þe sonne
His nose was highe his eyen bright^t Cytryn
His lippes rounde his colour was sanguyn 2168
A fewe frakenes in his face y-spreynd
Betwixe yelow and somdel blak^t y-meynd
And as a leon̄ he his lokyng^t caste
Of^t fyue and twenty ȝeer his age I caste 2172
His berd was wel begonne for to springe
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge
vpon his heed he wered a laurer grene
A garland freissche and lusty for to seene 2176
vpon his hand he bar for his deduyt^t

An Egle tame as eny lilie whit
An C. lordes hadde he with him þere
Aꝗ armed saue her heedes in al here gere 2180
fful richely in alle maner þinges
ffor trusteþ wel þat Dukes Erles kynges.
Were gadred in þis noble companye
ffor loue and for encrees of chiualrie 2184
aboute þis king þer ran on euery part
fful many a tame leoñ and lepart
And in þis wise þise lordes aꝗ and some
Ben on þe soneday to þe Cite come 2188
Aboute prime and in þe toun alighte
This Theseus þis Duk þis worþi knighte
Whan he hadde brought hem in to his Cite
And Inned hem euerich at his degre / 2192
He festeþ hem and doþ so gret labour
To eesen hem and don hem aꝗ honour [leaf 31, back]
That yet men weneþ þat no mannes wit
Of non estat ne couþe amenden it / 2196
The menstralcye þe seruise atte feste
The grete ȝiftes to þe meste and leste
The riche array of Theseus Paleys
Ne who sat ferst ne last vpon þe deys 2200
What ladies fairest ben or best daunsynge
Or which of hem can best daunsen or synge /
Ne who most felynglik spekeþ of loue
What haukes sitten on þe perche aboue / 2204
What houndes liggen on þe flor adoun
Of aꝗ þis make I now no mencioun
But alle þeffecte þat þinkeþ me þe beste
Now comeþ þe poynt and herkneþ if ȝou lest 2208
¶ The sonday night ar day bigan to springe
Whan Palamon þe larke herde synge
Al þough it / nere nought day by houres tuo
Ȝet song þe larke and Palamon right þo 2212
Wiþ holy herte and with an heigh corage

He ros to wenden on his pilgrimage
vnto þe blisful Citharea benigne
I mene Venus honorable and digne 2216
And in here houre he walkeþ forþ a paas
vnto þe lystes þer hire temple was
And doun he kneleþ and wiþ humble chere
And herte sore he seyde as ȝe schal heere 2220
¶ ffairest of faire O lady myn Venus
Doughter to Ioue and spouse to Vulcanus
Thou glader of þe mou*n*t of Citheroñ
ffor þilke loue þou haddest to adoñ 2224
Haue pite of my bittre teeres smerte /
and tak myn humble preier at þin herte
Allas I ne haue no langage to telle /
Theffectes ne þe torment of myn helle 2228
Myn herte may my*n* harmes nought bewreye
I am so confuse þat I can not seye [leaf 32]
But mercy lady bright þat knowest wele
My þought and seest what harmes þat I feele 2232
Considere al þis and rewe vpon my soore
As wisly as I schal for euermore
Emforth my myght þi trewe se*r*uañt be
And holden werre alwey wiþ chastite 2236
That I make myn avow so ȝe me helpe
I keepe nought of armes for to yelpe
Ne I ne axe nought to morwe to haue victorie
Ne reno*u*n in þis caas ne veine glorie 2240
Of pris of armes blowen vp and doun
But I wolde haue fully possessioun
Of emelye and dye in þi se*r*uise
ffynde yow þe maner how and in what wise 2244
I recche nat but it may bettre be
To haue victorie of hem or þei of me
So þat I may haue my lady in my*n* armes
ffor þough so be þat mars is god of armes 2248
youre vertue is so gret in heuen aboue

That[t] if[f] yow list[t] I schal wel haue my loue
Thy temple wil I worschipe euermo
An on þin auter wher I ride or go 2252
I wil don sacrifice and feeres beete
And if[f] ȝe wol not[t] so my lady sweete
Than pray I þe to morwe with a spere
þat[t] arcite me þurgh þe herte bere 2256
Than rekke I nat[t] whan I haue lost[t] my lyf[f]
þough þat[t] arcite wynne hir to his wyf
This is þeffect[t] and ende of[f] my preyere
yif[f] me my loue þou blisful lady deere 2260
Whan þe orisoñ was don of[f] Palamon
his sacrifise he dide and þat[t] anon
fful pitously wiþ alle circumstances
Al telle I not[t] as now his obseruances 2264
But atte laste þe Statue of[f] Venus schook[k]
And made a signe wherby þat[t] he took[k] [leaf 32, back]
That[t] his prayer accepted was þat day
ffor þough þe signe schewed a delay 2268
ȝit[t] wist[t] he weel þat[t] graunted was his boone
And with glad herte he went him home ful soone
The þridde hour inequal þat[t] Palamon
Bigan to venus temple for to gon 2272
vp roos þe sonne and vp roos Emelye
And to þe temple of[f] Diane gan hye
Hir maydenes þat[t] þider with hir ladde
fful redily with hem þe fyr þey hadde 2276
Thencens þe cloþes and þe remenant all
That[t] to þe sacrifice longen schall
The hornes full of methe as was þe gise
Ther lacked nat[t] to do hir sacrifise 2280
Smokyng[g] þe temple ful of[f] cloþes faire
This Emelye with herte debonaire
Hire body [wessh] with þe water of[f] a welle
But[t] how sche dide hire rite I dar not[t] telle 2284
But[t] it[t] be eny þing[g] in general

And ȝit' it' were a game to here it' al
To him that' meneþ wel it nere no charge
But' it is good a man be at' his large 2288
hire brighte heer was kempt' vntressed al
A Corone of' a grene oke Serial
vpon hire heed set' ful faire and mete
Tuo fyres on þe auter gan sche beete 2292
And dede hire þinges as men may biholde
In Stace of' Thebes and þise bookes olde
Whan kyndled was þe fyr wiþ pitous cheere
vnto Diane sche spak' as ȝe may heere 2296
O chaste goddesse of' þe woodes greene
To whom boþe heuen and erþe and see is seene
Queen of' þe regne of' Pluto dirk' and lowe
Goddesse of' maydenes þat' myn herte hast' knowe 2300
fful many a yeer and wost' what' I desire
As keepe me fro þi vengance and þin Ire [leaf 33]
That' attheon aboughte cruelly
Chaste goddesse wel wost' þou þat' I 2304
Desyre to ben a mayde all my lif'
Ne neuer wol I be no loue ne wijf'
I am þou wost' ȝit' of' þy compaignie
A maiden and loue huntyng' and venerie 2308
And for to walken in the woodes wilde
And nought' to ben a wijf' and be wiþ childe
Nought' wol I knowe compaignie of' man
Now helpe me lady siþþe ȝe may and can 2312
ffor þe þre formes þat' þou hast' in the
And Palamon þat' haþ swich loue to me
And eek' arcite þat' loueþ me so sore
This grace I preye ȝow wiþoute more 2316
And sende loue and pees bitwixe hem tuo
And fro me torne awey here hertes so
That' all here hoote loue and here desire
And all here besy torment' and here fire 2320
Be queynt' or torned in anoþer place

And if so be þou wolt not do me *grace*
Or if my destyne be schape so
That I schal needes haue oon of hem tuo 2324
As sende me him that most desireth me
Biholde goddesse of clene chastite
The bittre teeres þat on my cheekes falle
Syn þou art maiden and kep*e*re of vs all*e* 2328
My maydenhode þou kepe and wel conserue
And whil I lyue a maide I wol ȝou serue
¶ The fires brennen vpo þe auter cleer
Whil Emelye was þus in hire preyer 2332
But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynte
ffor right anon on of þe fyres queynte
And quiked agayn and after þat anon
That oþer fyr was queint and al a-gon 2336
And as it queinte it made a whistlinge
As don þese wete brondes in here brennynge / [leaf 33, back]
And at þe brondes ende out ran anon
As it were bloody dropes many on 2340
ffor which so sore a-gast was Emelye
That sche was ful ny mad and gan to crie
ffor sche ne wiste what it signefied
But oonly for þe feer þus haþ sche cried 2344
And weepe þat it was pite for to heere
And þer with al Diane gan appeere
With bowe in hand right as an hunteresse
And seyde doughter stynt þin heuynesse 2348
Among þe goddes heigh it is affermed
And by eterne word writen and confermed
Thou schalt be wedded vnto oon of þo
þat han for þe So mochel care and wo 2352
And vnto which of hem I may not telle
ffar-wel for I ne may no lenger dwelle
The fyres which þat on myn auter brenne
Schul þe declare ar þat ȝe gon henne / 2356
Thin auenture of loue as in þis caas

And wiþ þat word þe arwes in þe caas
Of þe goddesse clateren faste and rynge
And forþ sche wente and made a vanysschynge 2360
ffor which þis Emelye astoned was
And seide what amonteþ þis allas
I putte me in þi proteccion̄
Diane and in þi disposicion̄ 2364
And home sche goþ anon þe nexte weye
This is þeffecte þer nys namore to seye
The nexte hour of mars folwynge þis
Arcite vnto þe temple walked is 2368
Of fiers mars to don his sacrifise
Wiþ all þe rites of his payen wise
Wiþ pitous hert and heigh deuocion̄
Right þus to mars he seide his orison̄ 2372
O stronge god þat in þe regnes colde /
Of trace honoured art and lord y-holde [leaf 34]
And hast in euery regne and euery londe
Of armes al þe bridel in þin honde, 2376
And hem fortunest as þe lest deuyse
Accepte of me my pitous sacrifise /
If so be þat my youthe may deserue
And þat I mighte be worthy for to serue 2380
Thy godhede þat I may ben oon of þine
Than pray I þe to rewe vpon my pyne
ffor þilke pyne and þilke hoote fyre
In which þou whilom brendest for desire 2384
Whan þat þou vsedest þi beaute
Of faire ȝonge freissche Venus free /
And haddest hire in armes at þi wille
Al þough þe oones on a tyme mysfille / 2388
Whan Walcanus hadde caught þe in his laas
And fond þe ligging by his wijf allas
ffor þilke sorwe þat was in þin herte
Haue rouþe as wel vpon my peynes smerte 2392
I am yong and vnconnyng as þou wost

And as I trowe with loue offended moost
That euer was ony lyues creature
ffor sche þat doth me att þis woo endure 2396
Ne recche þ neuer wher I synke or fleete
And wel I woot ar sche me mercy heete
I moot wiþ strengþe wynne hire in þe place
And wel I woot wiþoute helpe or grace 2400
Of þe ne may my strengþe nought auaile
Than helpe me lord to morwe in my bataille
ffor þilke fyr þat whilom brente þe
As wel as þilke fir now brenneþ me 2404
And do þat I to morwe haue victorie
Myn be þe trauaile and þin be þi glorie /
Thy souerein temple wil I most honouren
Of eny place and alwey most labouren 2408
In þi plesance and in þi craftes stronge
And in þi temple I wil my baner honge, [leaf 34, back]
And att þe armes of my companye
And eu*er*emo vnto til þat day I dye 2412
Eterne fire I wol byfore þe fynde
And eek to þis avow I wil me bynde
My berd myn here þat longeþ longe a doun
That neuer ȝet ne felte offensio*un* 2416
Of rasour nor of schere I wil þe yiue
And ben þi trewe se*r*uant whil I liue
Now lord haue rouþe vpon my sorwes sore
If me þe victorie I axe þe namore 2420
¶ The preyer stynte of Arcita þe stronge
The rynges on the temple dore þat honge
And eek þe dores clateren ful faste,
Of which arcita somwhat him agaste 2424
Þe fyres brenden vp þe auter bright
That it gan al þe temple for to light
And sweete smel the ground anon vp yaf
And arcita anon his hand vp haf 2428
And more encense in to þe fir he caste

With oþre rites moo and atte laste
The statut of mars bigan his hauberk rynge
And with þe soun he herd a mormoringe 2432
fful lowe *and* dym þat seyde þis victorie
ffor which he ȝaf to mars honour and glorie
And þus with ioye and hope wel to fare
Arcite anon vnto his Inne is fare 2436
As fayn as foul is of þe brighte sonne
And right anon such strif is bygonne
ffor þilke grauntyng in þe heuen aboue
Bitwixe venus þe goddesse of loue 2440
And Mars þe sterne god armipotent
That Iubiter was besy it to stent/
Til þat þe pale Saturnus þe colde
That knewe so many of auentures olde 2444
ffond in his olde exp*er*ience an arte
That he ful sone haþ plesed euery parte / [leaf 35]
A soþ is seyde elde haþ gret auantage
In eelde is boþe wisdom and vsage / 2448
Men may þe olde at renne and nought a-trede
Saturne anoon to stynte strif and drede
Al be it þat it is agayn his kinde
Of alle þis strif he gan remedye fynde 2452
My deere doughter Venus q*uo*d Saturne
My cours þat haþ so wide for to turne
Haþ more power þan wot any man
Myn is þe drynclyng in þe see so wan 2456
Myn is þe prisoñ in þe derke cote
Myn is þe strañgle and hangyng by þe þrote
The murmure and þe cherles rebellinge
The gronyng and þe priue emp*ri*sonynge 2460
I do vengeance and plein correccioñ
Wil I dwelle in þe signe of þe leoñ
Myn is þe ruine of þe hihe halles
The fallyng of þe toures and of þe walles 2464
vpon þe mynour and þe Carpenter

I slough Sampson schakynge þe piler
And myne ben þe maladies colde
þe derke tresons, and þe castes olde 2468
my lokyng' is þe fader of' pestilence
Now weep namore I schal don diligence
That' Palamon þat' is þin owne knight'
Schal haue his lady as þou him bihight' 2472
Though mars schal helpe his knight' ȝet' naþeles
Betwixe ȝow þer moot' be som tyme pees
All be ȝe nought' boþe of' oo complexion
That' causeþ alday swich diuision 2476
I am þin ayell redy at' þi wille
Weepe now namore I wil þi lust' fulfille
¶ Now wol I stente of' þe goddes aboue
Of' mars and of' venus goddesses of' loue 2480
And telle yow as pleinly as I can
The grete effect' for which þat I bygan [leaf 35, back]

[*PART IV. No gap in the MS.*]

Gret' was þe feste in Athenes þat' day
And eek' þat' lusty sesoun of' þat' may 2484
Made euery knight' to ben in such plesance
That' al þat' monday ioustne þei and daunce
And spend in heigh venus seruise
But' by þe cause þat' þai scholde rise 2488
Erly for to seen þe grete fight
vnto here reste wente þei at night'
And on the morwe whan þat day gan springe,
Of' hors and harneys noyse and clateringe 2492
Ther was in hostelleries al aboute
And to þe paleys rood þer many a route
Of' lordes vpon steedes and palfreys
Ther maystow seen diuisyng' of' harneys 2496
So vncouth and so riche wrought' so wel
Of' goldsmythrie of' broudyng' and of' steel

þe scheelde bright testeres and trappures
Gold hewen helmes hauberkes cote armures 2500
lordes in paramentz on here courseres
Knightes of Retenu and eek squieres
Nayling þe speres and helmes boclyng
Gydyng of scheldes wiþ layners lasyng 2504
There as neede is þei were noþing ydel
The fomy steedes on þe goldene bridel
Gnawen and faste þe armureres also /
Wiþ file and hamer priking to and fro / 2508
yomen on foote and comunes many oon
Wiþ schorte staues þikke as þey may gon
Pypes trompes nakers Clariouns
That in þe bataille blowe bloody sownes 2512
The paleys ful of poeples vp and doun
Here þre þere ten holdyng here questioun
Dyuynyng of þise Thebane knightes tuo
Som seide þus som seide it schal be so 2516
Som holden with him with þe blake berde
Som wiþ þe balled som with þe þikke herde [leaf 36]
Som seide he loked grym and he wold fighte
He haþ a Sparth of xx. pound of highte 2520
Thus was þe halle ful of diuinyng
longe after þat þe sonne gan to spring
The grete Theseus þat of his sleep awaked
Wiþ menstralcye and noyse þat was maked 2524
Heeld ȝet þe chambres of his paleys riche
Til þat þe Thebane knightes boþen I-liche
Honorably weren in to þe paleys fette
Duc Theseus is at þe wyndow sette 2528
Arraied right as he were god in trone
The poepel presed þiderward fulsone /
Him for to seen and don heigh reuerence /
And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence 2532
An herald on a scaffold made an hoo
Til al þe noise of þe poepul was I-doo

And whan he say þe pepul of noyse al stille
Thus schewed he þe mighty dukes wille 2536
The lord hath of his heigh discrecion
Considered þat it were destruccion
To gentil blood to fighten in þis gise
Of mortel bataille now in þis emprise 2540
Wher fore to schapen þat þei schal not deye
He wol his ferste purpos modifye
No man þerfore vpon peyne of his lyf
No maner schot ne pollax ne schort knyf 2544
In to þe lystes sende or þider brynge
Ne schort swerd for to stoke with poynt bytynge
No man ne drawe ne bere it by his syde
No man schal to his felawe ride 2548
But oo cours with a scharp y-grounde spere
ffoyne if him list on foote himself to were /
And he þat is at meschief schal be take
And nought slain but be brought vnto þe stake 2552
That schal ben ordeyned on eyþer syde /
But þider he schal be force and þer abyde / [leaf 36, back]
And if so falle þe cheuentein be take /
On eyther syde or elles sleen his make 2556
No lenger ne schal þe torneyenge laste
God speede ȝou go forth and lay on faste /
Wiþ longe swerdes and ȝour maces fighteþ ȝour fille
Go now your wey þis is þe lordes wille 2560
The voys of þe poeple touchede heuene
So lowde criede þei with merie steuene
God saf swich a lord þat is so good
He wilneþ no distruction of blood 2564
Vp goþ þe trompes and þe melodye
And to þe listes ritte the compaignye
By ordinance þorugh out þe cite large
Hanged wiþ cloþ of gold and nought with Sarge / 2568
fful lik a lord this noble duk gan ryde
These tuo Thebanes vpon eyþer syde

And after roode þe queene and Emelye /
And after þat' another compaignye / 2572
Of' on and oþer after here degre
And þus þey passen þurgh out' þe Citee
And to þe lystes come þey be tyme
It' nas nat' of' þe day ȝet' fullich p*ri*me 2576
Whan sette was Theseus ful riche and hye
ypolita þe queen and Emelye
And oþer ladyes in degree aboute
vnto þe seetes preseþ al þe route 2580
And westward þurgh þe gates vnder marte
Arcite and eek' þe hundred of' his parte
Wiþ baner reed is entred right' anon
And in þat' selue moment' Palamon 2584
Is vnder venus Estward in þe place
Wiþ baner whit' and hardy chere and face
In al þe world to seken vp and doun
So euene wiþoute variacio*un* 2588
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye
ffor þer was non so wys þat' couþe seie [leaf 37]
That' eny hadde of' oþer auantage
Of' worþinesse ne of' astaat' ne age 2592
So euene were þei chose for to gesse
And in to Rynges faire þei hem dresse
Whan þat' here names rad were eu*er*ychon
That' in here nombre gyle were þer non 2596
Tho were þe gates schette and cryed was lowde
Do now ȝour deuoir yonge knightes proude
¶ The heraudes lefte here prikyng' vp and doun
Now ryngeþ trompes lowde *and* clarioun 2600
Ther is namore to sein West' and Est'
In goþ þe speres ful sadly in arest
In goþ the scharpe spore in to þe syde
þer seen men who can Iustne and who can ryde 2604
Ther schyueren schaftes vpon scheeldes þikke
He feeleþ þorugh̄ þe herte spoon þe prikke

vp springeþ speres twenty foot on heighte
Out gon þe sweerdes as þe seluer brighte 2608
The helmes þer to hewen and to schrede
Out brest þe blood with sterne streemes reede
With mighty maces þe bones þei tobreste
he þurgh þe þikkest on þe prong gan preste 2612
Ther stomblen steedes stronge and doun gon alle
he rolleþ vnder foot as doþ a balle
he foyneþ on his foot with his tronchoun
And he him hurteþ with his hors a doun 2616
he þurgh̄ þe body is hurt and siþþen take
Maugre his heed and brought̄ vnto þe stake
As forward was right̄ þer he moste abyde
Anoþer is ladde on þat oþer syde 2620
And som tyme doþ hem Theseus to reste
hem to refreissche and drynken if hem leste
fful ofte a-day han þise Thebanes two
Togydre ymett and wrought his felawe wo 2624
vnhorsed haþ ech oþer of hem tweye
Ther nas no Tygre in vale of Galgopheie [leaf 37, back]
Whan þat hire whelp is stole whan it is lite
So cruel on þe hunte as is Arcite 2628
ffor Ialouse herte vpon þis Palamon
Ne in belmaryn þer nys so fel leon̄
That hunted is or for his hunger wood
Ne of his prey desireþ so þe blood 2632
Of Palamon to sle his foo arcite
The Ialous strokes on here helmes byte
Out renneth blood on boþe here sydes reed
Som tyme an ende þer is of euery deed 2636
ffor or þe sonne vnto þe reste wente
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon as he faught with arcite
And made his sweerd deepe in fleissh byte 2640
And by þe force of twenty is he take
vn-yolden and drawen to þe stake

And in þe rescous of þis Palamoun
The stronge knight ligurge is born a doun 2644
And king Emetreus for all his strengþe
Is born out of his sadell a swerdes lengthe
So hitte him Palamon or he were take
But al for nought he was brought to þe stake 2648
his hardy herte might him helpe naught
he moste abide whan þat he was caught
By force and eek by composicioñ
Who sorweþ now but woful Palamoñ 2652
þat moot nomore gon azen to fighte
And whan þat Theseus hadde seen þis sighte
he cried ho namore for it is doñ
Ne non schal lenger to his felaw gon 2656
I wil be trewe Iugge and not partie /
Arcite of Thebes schal haue Emelye
That by his fortune haþ hir faire y-wonne
Anon þer is a noyse of poepel bygonne 2660
ffor ioye of þis so loude and heigh wiþ alle /
It semed þat þe lystes scholde falle [leaf 38]
¶ What can now faire venus don aboue
What seiþ sche now what doþ þis queen of loue 2664
But weepeþ so for wantyng of hir wille
Til þat hire teeres in þe lystes fille /
Sche seyde I am aschamed douteles
Saturnus seyde doughter hold þi pees 2668
Mars haþ his wille his knight hath all his boone
And by myn heed þou schalt ben eesed soone
The trompoures wiþ þe lowde menstralcye
The heraudes þat ful lowde yelle and crye/ 2672
Ben in here wele for ioye of daun Arcite
But herkneþ me and stynteþ noyse alite/
Which a miracle þer bifel anon
This fiers Arcite haþ of his helm y-doon 2676
And on a courser for to schewe his face
He prikeþ endelong þe large place

lokyng vpward vpon þis Emelye
And sche again him caste a frendlich yhe 2680
ffor wo*m*men as to speken in comune
Thei folwen all þe fauour of fortune/
And was al his chier as in his herde/
Out of þe ground a fir Infernal sterte/ 2684
ffrom pluto sent atte request of Saturne/
ffor which his hors for feere gan to turne/
And leep a syde and foundred as he leep
And ar þat arcite may taken keep 2688
he plight him on þe pomel of his heede
That in þe place he lay as he were deede
His brest to-brosten with his sadel bowe
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe 2692
So was þe blood y-ronne in his face
Anon he was born out of þe place
Wiþ herte soor to Theseus paleys
Tho was he coruen out of his harneys 2696
And in a bed I-brought ful fair and blyue
ffor he was yet in memorie and a lyue / [leaf 38, back]
And alwey cryeng after Emelye
Duc Theseus with all his companye/ 2700
Is comen hom to Athenes his Citee
With all*e* blisse and gret solempnete
Al be it þat þis auenture was falle
he nolde not disconforten hem alle 2704
Men seyde eek þat arcite schal not dye
he schal ben heled of his maladye
And of anoþer þing þei were as fayn
That of hem all*e* was þer non y-slayn 2708
Alle were þei sore hurt and namely oon
That with a spere was þerled his brest boon
To oþer woundes and to broken armes
Some hadden salue *and* some hadden charmes 2712
ffermacies of herbes and eek saue
Thei dronke for þei wolde here lyues haue

ffor which þis noble Duc as he wel can
Conforteþ and honoureþ euery man 2716
And makeþ reuel al þe lange night
vnto þe straunge lordes as it was right
Ne þer was holden no disconfytyng
But as a Iustnes or a torneying 2720
ffor soþly þer was no disconfiture
ffor fallyng nys but an auenture
Ne to be ladde by force to þe stake
vnyolden and with twenty knightes take 2724
A *per*sone alone wiþouten mo
And haried forþ by arme foot and too
And eek his steede driuen forþ wiþ staues
Wiþ foot men boþe yomen and knaues 2728
It was arretted him no vilanye
Ther may no man clepe it Cowardie
ffor which anon Duk Theseus leet crie
To stynte alle rancour and enuye 2732
The gree as wel of oo syde as of oþer
And eiþer side ylik as oþer broþer [leaf 39]
And yaf hem ȝiftes after here degre
and fully heeld he feste dayes þre 2736
And conueyed þe kynges worþily
Out of his toun a iorney largely
And hom went euery man þe righte way
Ther was namore but far wel and haue good day 2740
Of þis bataille I wol no more endite
But speke of Palamon and [of] arcite
¶ Swelleþ þe brest of Arcite and þe sore
Encreceþ at his herte more and more 2744
The cloþ-red blood for eny lechecraft
Coruptеþ and is in his bouk I-laft
Thaf neyþer veyne blood ne ventusynge
Ne drynk of herbes may ben his helpynge 2748
The vertue expulsif or animal
ffro þilke vertu cleped natural

Ne may þe venym voide ne expelle/
The pipes of his longes gan to swelle 2752
And euery lacerte in his brest adoun
Is schent with venym and corrupcio*un*
Him gayneþ neyþer for to gete his lijf
vomyt vpward ne dounward laxatif 2756
Al is to-brusten þilke regioñ
Nature haþ no dominacioñ
And certeynly þer nature wil not werche
ffare wel phisik go bere þe man to cherche / 2760
This al and som þat arcita mot dye
ffor which he sendeth after Emelye
And Palamon þat was his cousyn deere
Than seyde he þus as ȝe schal after heere 2764
¶ Nat may þe woful spirit in myn herte
Declare a poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To you my lady þat I loue moost
But I biqueþe þe seruice of my gost 2768
To yow abouen euery creature /
Syn þat my lijf may no lenger dure [leaf 39, back]
Allas þe woo allas þe peynes stronge /
That I for ȝou haue suffred and so longe / 2772
Allas þe deth allas myn Emelye
Allas departyng of oure companye
Allas myn hertes queene allas my lyf
Myn hertes lady endere of my lif 2776
What is þis world what axed men to haue
Now with with his loue now in his colde g*r*aue
Allone wiþouten eny companye
ffar-wel my sweete foo myn Emelye 2780
And softe take me in ȝoure armes tweye
ffor loue of god and herkneþ what I seye
¶ I haue here with my cosyn Palamon
Hadde strif and rancour many a day agon 2784
ffor loue of yow and for my Ialousye
And Iuppiter so wis my soule gye

To speken of a seruant propurly
With circumstances alle trewely 2788
That is to sein troupe honour and knighthede
Wisdom humblesse estat and heigh kynrede
ffredom and al þat longeþ to þat art
So Iuppiter haue of my soule parte 2792
As in þis worlde right now knowe I non
So worþi to be loued as Palamon
That serueþ yow and wil don all his lif
And if þat euere ȝe schal be a wif 2796
fforyete nat Palamon the gentilman
And with þat word his speche faile gan
ffor from his feet vnto his brest was come
The colde of deþ þat hadde him ouercome / 2800
And yet more ouer for in his armes tuo
The vital strengþe is lost and all ago
Oonly þe intellecte wiþoute more
That dwelled in his herte sik and sore / 2804
Gan faillen whan þe herte felte deþ
Busked his yhen tuo and failed breþ [leaf 40]
But on his lady ȝet cast he his yhe
His laste word was mercy Emelye 2808
his spirit changed hous and wente þere
As I cam neuer I can nought telle where
Therfore I stynte I am no dyuinistre
Of soules fynde I nat in þat registre 2812
Ne me ne list þilke opinions to telle
Of hem þough þat þey writen wher þei duelle
Arcite is cold þat mars his soule gye
Now wol I speke forth of Emelye 2816
Schrighte Emelye and houleþ Palamon
And Theseus his suster took anoon
Swounyng and bar hire fro þe cors away
What helpeþ it to tarien forþ þe day 2820
To tellen how sche weepe boþe eue and morwe
ffor in such caas wommen haue such sorwe

Whan þat here housbondes ben fro hem a-go
That for þe more part þei sorwen so 2824
Or elles fallen in swich a maladye
That atte laste certeinly þey dye
Infinite ben þe sorwes and þe teeres
Of olde folk And folk of tendre ȝeeres 2828
In alle þe toun for deþ of þis Teban
ffor him þer weepeþ boþe child and man
So gret weepynge was þer non certayn
Whan Ector was brought al fresshe y-slayn 2832
To Troye allas the pite þat was þere
Cracching of cheekes rendyng eek of here
Whi woldestow ben deed þis wo*m*men crye
And haddest gold ynough and Emelye 2836
No man mighte gladen Theseus
Sauyng his olde fader Egeus
That knew þis worldes transmutacio*un*
As he hadde seyn it vp and doun 2840
Ioye after woo. and woo after gladnesse
And scheweth hem ensample and liknesse [leaf 40, back]
Right as þer dede neuer man q*uo*d he
That he ne lyued in erþe in som degree / 2844
Right so þer lyuede neuere man he seyde
In al þis world þat som tyme he ne deyde
This world is not but a þurghfare ful of wo
And we ben pilgrimes passyng to and fro 2848
Deþ is an ende of cu*er*y worldly sore
And ouer al þis ȝet seide he mochel more
To þis effect ful wisly to enhorte
The poeple. þat þei schulde him reconforte 2852
Duc Theseus with alle his busy cure
Cast now wher þat þe Sepulture
Of good arcite may best y-maked be
And eek most honorable in his degre 2856
And at þe last he took conclusioñ
That þer as first arcite and Palamoñ

hadde for loue þe bataille hem bitweene
That in þe selue groue swete and greene 2860
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires
his compleynt and for loue his hoote fyres
he wolde make a fyr in which þe office
ffuneral he mighte hem all complice 2864
he leet anon comande to hakke and hewe
The ookes olde and leyen hem on a rewe
In culpons wel arrayed for to brenne
his officers with swifte foot þey renne 2868
And Ride anon at his comandement
And after þis Theseus haþ y-sent
After a beere and it al ouerspradde
Wiþ cloþ of gold þe richest þat he hadde 2872
And of þe same suyte he cladde arcite
vpon his hondes his gloues white
Ek on his heed a croune of laurer greene
And in his hond a swerd [ful] bright and keene 2876
he leyde him bare þe visage on þe beere
Ther with he weep that pite was to heere [leaf 41]
And for þe pepul scholde seen him alle
Whan it was day he brought him in to þe halle 2880
That roreþ of þe crye and þe soun
¶ Tho com þis woful Theban Palamon
With flotery berd and ruggy asschy heeres
In cloþes blak y-dropped al with teeres 2884
And passyng oþer of weepyng Emelye
The reufullest of all þis companye
In as moche as þe seruice scholde bee
The more noble and riche in his degree 2888
Duc Theseus leet for[þ] þre steedes bringe
That trapped were in steel al gliterynge
And couered with þe armes of daun arcite
vpon þese steedes greete and white 2892
Ther seten folk of which on bar his scheeld
Anoþer his spere vpon his hondes heelde

The þridde bar with him his bowe turkeys
Of brent gold was þe caas and eek þe harneys 2896
And ryden forþ a paas with sorwful cheere
Toward þe groue as ȝe schul after heere
The noblest of þe Greekes þat þer were
vpon here schuldres carieden þe beere 2900
With slake paas and eighen reede and wete
þurghout þe Cite by þe maistre streete /
That sprad was al with blak and wonder highe
Right of þe same is þe same is þe street y-wrye 2904
vpon þe right hond went olde Egeus
And on þat other syde duk Theseus
With vessels in here hand of gold ful fyne
As ful of hony melk and blood and wyne 2908
Ek Palaman with ful gret companye
And after þat com woful Emelye
With fire in honde as was þat tyme þe gyse
To do þoffice of funeral seruise 2912
Heigh labour and ful gret apparaillyng
Was atte seruise and þe fir makyng [leaf 41, back]
That wiþ his greene top þe heuene raughte
And twenty fadme of brede þe armes straughte / 2916
This is to sein þe bowes were so brode
Of stree first þer was leyd many a loode
But how þe fir was maked vp on heighte
Ne eek þe names how þe trees hightе 2920
As Ok. fir. birch. asp. Alder. holm. popeler
Willow. Elm. plane. Assh. box. chesteyn lynde laurer.
Mapel. þorn. beech. hasiłł. ew. whipiltre
how þey were felde schal not be told for me 2924
Ne how þe goddes ronnen vp and doun
Disherited of here habitacioun
In which þei woneden in reste and pees
Nymphes ffawnes and amadries / 2928
Ne how þe beestes and þe briddes alle
ffledden for feered whan þe woode was falle /

Ne how þe ground agast' was of' þe light'
That' was not' wont' to see þe sonne bright' 2932
Ne how þe fyr was couched first' with stree /
And þanne with drye stockes clouen a þre
And þanne with greene woode and spicerie
And þanne with cloth of' gold and wiþ Perrye 2936
And garlandes hangyng' with ful many a flour
The mirre þencens with al so sweete odour
Ne how arcite lay among' al þis
Ne what' richesse aboute his body is 2940
Ne how þat' Emelye as was þe gyse
Putte in þe fyre of' funeral seruise /
Ne how sche swounede whan maad was þe fire
Ne what' sche spak' ne what' was hire desire 2944
Ne what' Iuwels men in þe fyre cast'
Whan þat' þe fyr was greet' and brende fast'
Ne how som cast' hir scheeld and som hire spere
And of' here vestimentz whiche þat' þey were 2948
And coppes full' of' melk' and wyn and blood
Into þe fyr þat' brente as it' were wood [leaf 42]
Ne how þe Grekes with an huge route
Thries ryden al þe fir aboute 2952
vpon þe left' hond with a bowe schotynge
And þries with here speres clateryngе
And þries how þe ladyes gon to crye
Ne how þat' lad was homward Emelye 2956
Ne how arcite is brent' to aisshes colde
Ne how þat' liche-wake was y-holde
Al þilke nyght' ne how þe greekes play
The wake-pleyes ne kepe I nought' to say 2960
Who wrasteleþ best' naked with oyle anoynt'
Ne who þat' bar him best' in no disioynt'
I wol not' tellen alle how þey goon
hom til athenes whan þe play was don 2964
But' schortly to þe poynt' þan wol I wende
And maken of' my longe tale an ende

¶ By proces and of lengthe of certeyn ȝeeres
Al stynt is þe mournyng and þe teeres 2968
Of grekes by on gen*er*al assent
Than semede þer was a p*ar*lement
At atthenes vpon a certein point and caas
Among þe whiche poyntes y-spoken was 2972
To haue with certain contrees alliance
And haue fully of Thebane obeissañce
ffor which þis noble Theseus anon
leet seende after gentil Palamon 2976
vnwist of him what was þe cause and why
But in his blake cloþes sorwfully
he com at his comandement in hye
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye 2980
Whan þey were sette and huyst was in þe place /
An Theseus abyden haþ a space
Or eny word com fro his wise breste
his eyȝen sette he þer as was his leste / 2984
And with a sad visage he siked stille /
And after þat right þus he seyde his wille [leaf 12, back]
The ferste maner of þe cause aboue
Whan he first maade þe faire cheine of loue 2988
Gret was þeffect and heigh was his entente
Wel wist he why and what þer of he mente
ffor with þat faire cheyne of loue he bonde
The fyr. þe aier. the water and þe londe 2992
In certeyn boundes þat þei may not flee /
That same prince and þat same mouer q*uo*d he
haþ stablissed in þis wrecchede world a-doun
Certeine daies and d*omi*nacio*un* 2996
To all þat beþ engendred in þis place
Ouer þe whiche day þay may not pace
Alle mowe þey yet þo dayes abregge
Ther neede þ nought non auc*tori*te to legge 3000
ffor it is proeued by exp*er*ience
But þat me list to declaren my sentence /

Than may men wel by þis ordre discerne
That⁺ þilke mouere stable is and eterne 3004
Wel may men knowe but⁺ it⁺ be a foole
That⁺ eu*er*y p*ar*tie darreyned from his hoole
ffor nature haþ nat⁺ taken his bygynnyng⁺
Of⁺ no partye nor of⁺ cantel of⁺ a þing⁺ 3008
But⁺ of⁺ a þing⁺ þat⁺ p*ar*fyt⁺ is and stable
Descendyng⁺ so til it⁺ be corumpable
And þerfore for his wise purueance
he haþ so wel byset⁺ his ordinance 3012
That⁺ specie of⁺ þinges and progressions
Schullen endure by successions
And nought⁺ et*er*ne wiþouten any lye
This maystow vnderstonden and seen at⁺ yhe 3016
Loo þe Ok⁺ þat⁺ haþ so long⁺ a norshing⁺
ffro þe tyme þat⁺ it⁺ first⁺ bygynneþ to spring⁺
And hath so long⁺ a lijf⁺ as ȝe may see
Yet atte laste wasted is þe tree / 3020
Considereþ eek⁺ how þat⁺ þe harde ston
vnder oure foot⁺ on which we trede and goon [leaf 43]
Yet⁺ wasteþ it⁺ as it⁺ liþ by þe weye
The brode ryuer som tyme wexeþ dreye 3024
The grete townes see we wane and wende
þan ȝe see þat⁺ all þis þing⁺ haþ ende
Of⁺ man and woman se we wel also
That⁺ needeth in oon of⁺ þe termes tuo 3028
That is to sein in ȝouþe or elles age
He moot⁺ be deed þe king⁺ as schal þe page
Sum in his bedd . som in þe deepe see
Som in the large feeld as ȝe may see / 3032
Ther helpeþ nought⁺ al goþ þat⁺ ilke weye
Than may I sein that⁺ al þis þing⁺ moot⁺ deye
What⁺ maketh þis but⁺ Iuppiter þe king⁺
That⁺ is Prince and cause of⁺ all*e* þing⁺ 3036
Conuertyng⁺ alle vnto his p*ro*pre wille
ffrom which it is darreyned soþ to tille

And heer agayns no creature on lyue
Of no degree auailleþ for to stryue 3040
Thanne is it wisdom as it þenkeþ me
To make vertue of necessite /
And take it wel þat we may not eschewe
And nameliche þat to vs alle is dewe 3044
. . . . . [*No gap: line left out.*]
And rebeꝗ is to him þat aꝗ may gye
And certeinly a man haþ most honour
To deyen in his excellence and flour 3048
Whan he is siker of his goode name
Than haþ he doon his freendes ne him no schame
And gladder oughte his frendes ben of his deþ
Whan wiþ honour y-yolden is vp þe breþ 3052
Than whan his name apalled is for age
ffor al forgeten is his vessellage
Than is the beste as for a worþy fame
To deyen whan he is best of name 3056
The contrarie of alle þis is wilfulnesse
Why grucchen we why haue we heuynesse
That goode Arcite of Chiuallerie þe flour [leaf 43, back]
Departed is wiþ duete and with hono*ur* 3060
Out of þis foule p*ri*soñ of þis lyf
Why grucheþ heere his cosyn and his wyf
Of his welfare þat loueþ him so wel
Kan he hem þank nay god woot neuer a deel 3064
That boþen his soule and eek him offende /
And yet þei mowe her lustes nought amende
What may conclude of þis longe serie
But after wo I rede vs to be merye 3068
And þanken Iupit*er* of aꝗ his g*ra*ce
And er we departen from þis place
I rede we make of oure sorwes tuo
O parfyt ioye lastyng eu*er* mo 3072
And lokeþ now where most sorwe is Inne
Ther wol I fers amenden and bygynne

Suster quod he þis is my ful assent
Wiþ alle þauys heere of my parlement / 3076
That gentil Palamon ȝoure oughne knight
That serueth ȝou with wille and herte and might /
And euer haþ don siþen ye first him knewe
That ȝe schull of ȝour grace vpon him rewe 3080
And taken him for housbond and for lord
Lene me your hond for þis is oure acord
Lat see now of your wommanly pite
he is a kinges broþer sone parde 3084
And þough he were a pore Bachiller
Syn he haþ serued you so many a yeer
And had for ȝou so gret aduersite /
It moste ben considered leeueþ me 3088
ffor gentil mercy oughte to passen right
Than seide he þus to Palamon þe knight
I trowe þer needeþ litel sermonyng
To make you assented to þis þing 3092
Come nere and take ȝoure lady by þe hond
Bitwixen hem was maad anon þe bond
That highte matrimoigne or mariage [leaf 44]
By alle þe counsail and þe baronage 3096
And þus wiþ alle blisse and melodye
Haþ Palamon y-wedded Emelye
And god þat al þis world haþ wrought
Sende him his loue þat haþ it deere bought 3100
ffor now is Palamon in alle wele
Lyuyng in blisse in richesse and in hele
And Emely him loueth so tendrely
And he hir serueþ so gentilly 3104
That was þer no word hem betweene /
Of Ialousie or ony oþer teene
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye /
And god saue alle þis faire companye 3108

[*no gap in the MS.*]

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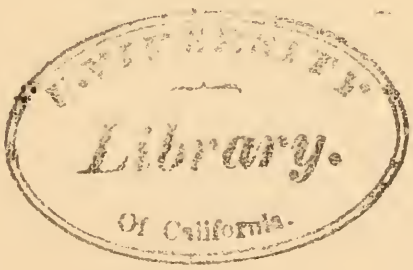
¶ The Millewardes tale/

Whan þat þe knight had þus his tale y-told
In alle þe companye nas þer ȝong ne old
That he ne seyde it / was a noble storye
And worþi for to drawen in memorie 3112
And nameliche þe gentils euerych oon
Oure Oost lough and swor so mot I gon
This goþ aright vnbokeled is þe male/
lat se now who schal telle anoþer tale 3116
ffor trewely þe game is wel bygonne
Now telleþ ȝe sire monk if ȝe kunne
Somwhat to quyte with þe knightes tale
The meller þat for-drunken was al pale 3120
So þat vnneþe vpon his hors he sat
he nolde aualen neyþer hood ne hat
Ne abide noman for his curtesie/
But in Pilates vois he gan to crye 3124
And swor by armes and by blood and bones
I can a noble tale for þe nones
Wiþ which I wol now quite þe knightes tale
Oure oost saugh þat he was drunken of ale 3128
And seyde abyde Robyn leeue broþer
Som bettre man schal telle vs ferst anoþer [leaf 44, back]
Abyd and lat vs werken þriftily
By goddes soule quod he *þat* wol nat I 3132
ffor I wol speken or elles go my weye
Oure oost answerde /telle on a deuelleweye
Thou art a fool þi witte is ouercome
Now herkneþ quoþ þe meller alle and some 3136
But first I make a protestacio*un*
That I am dronke I knowe it by my soun
And þerfore if I speke or mys say
Wite ȝe it þe ale of Suthwerk I ȝou pray 3140

ffor I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Boþe of a Carpenter and of his wijf /
how þat a clerk haþ sett þe wrightes cappe
The Reeue answerde and seyde stynt þy clappe 3144
lat be þi lewed dronken harlotrie
It is a synne and eeke gret folye
To apeiren eny man or diffame
And eek to bringe wyfes in such fame 3148
Thou maist ynough of oþer þinges sain
This dronken meller spak ful soone agayn
And seyde leeue broþer Osewold /
Who has no wyf he is no Cokewold 3152
But I seye nought *þer*fore þat þou art oon
Ther been ful goode wyfes many on
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 3156
Why art þou angry wiþ my tale now
I haue a wif *par*de as wel as þou
Yet nolde I not for þe Oxen in my plough
Take vpon me more þan ynough 3160
As demen on my self þat I were oon
I wil bileeue þat I am noon
And housbonde schal not ben Inquysitif
Of goddes priuetees ne of his wijf 3164
So he may fynde goddes foysoñ þere/
Of þe remenant neded nought to enquere
What scholde I more sayn but þis Mellere
he nolde his wordes for no man forbere [leaf 45]
But tolde his cherles tale in his manere
Me aþinkeþ þat I schal reherce hem heere
And þerfore euery gentil wight I preye
Demeþ nought for goddes loue þat I seye 3172
Of yuel entent but for þat I moot reherse
Here tales alle be þei bettre or worse
Or elles falsen som of my matiere
And þer-fore who so list it nought to heere 3176

Torne ouer þe leef[1] and chees anoþer tale
ffor ȝe schulle fynde ynowe grete *and* smale
Of[1] storial þing[1] þat[1] toucheþ gentilesse
And eek[1] moralite and holynesse 3180
Blameþ not[1] me if[1] þat[1] ȝe cheese amys
The meller is a cherl ȝe knowe wel þis
So was þe Reeue eek[1] and oþer mo
And harlotrie þey tolden boþe tuo 3184
Auiseþ ȝou and putteþ me out of blame
And eek[1] men schal not[1] make ernest of game

[*No gap in the MS.*]



Whilom þer was dwellyng at Oxenfoord
A Riche gnoffe þat gestes heeld to boorde 3188
And of his crafte he was a Carpunter
Wiþ him þer was dwellyng a pouer scoler
hadde lerned art but all his fantasye
Was torned for to lerne astrologie/ 3192
And couþe a certein of conclusions
To demen by inter*r*ogacioñs
If þat men axed him in certeyn houres
Whan men schuld haue drought or elles schoures 3196
Or if men axed him what schal bifalle
Of euery þing I may nought reknen alle
This clerk was cleped heende Nicholas
Of derne loue he couþe and of Solas 3200
And þer-to he was sleigh and ful priue
And like a mayde meeke for to see
A chambre hadde he in þat hostellerie
Allone wiþouten eny companye [leaf 45, back]
fful fetisly dight wiþ herbes soote
And he himself as sweete as is þe roote
Of licoris or any Settewale
his almagist and bokes grete and smale 3208
his astrelabre longyng for his art
his augrym stones' layen faire a part
On schelfes couched at his beddes heede
His presse y-couered with a faldyng reed 3212
And al aboute þer lay a gay sautrie
On which he made a night melodye
So swetly þat alle þe chambre ronge
And angelus ad virgine*m* he songe 3216
And after þat he song þe kinges note
fful ofte blessed was his merie þrote

And þus þe sweete clerk' his tyme spente
After his freendes fyndyng' and his rente 3220
This Carpunter hadde wedded a newe wyf'
Which þat' he louede more þan his lyf
Of xviij. ȝeer sche was of' age
Ialous he was and heeld hir narwe in cage 3224
ffor sche was wylde and ȝong' and he was old
And demed him self' ben lik' a Cokewold
he knew not' Catoñ for his witte was rude
That' bad men wedde his similitude 3228
Men scholde wedde after here astat
ffor youþe and eelde is often in debat
But' siþen þat' he was fallen in the snare
He most' endure as oþer folk' his care 3232
ffair was þis ȝonge wijf' and þer wiþ al
As eny wesele hire body gent' and smal
A ceynt' sche wered barred al of' self'
A barmcloþ as whit' as morne melk' 3236
Vpon hire lendes ful of' many a goore
Whit' was hir smok' and brouded al bifore
And eek' byhynde on hire coler aboute
Of' kolblak' silk' wiþinne and eek' wiþoute [leaf 46]
The tapes of' hir white voluper
Were of' þe same suyte of' hire coler
hire filet' brood of' silk' and sitt' ful hye
and sikerly sche hadde a likerous yhe 3244
fful smal y-pulled were hire browes tuo
And þo were bent' and blak' as any slo
Sche was ful more blisful for to see/
Than is þe newe p*er*ionette tree 3248
And softer þan þe wolle is of' a weþer
And by hir gerdul hinge a purs of' leþer
Tassed wiþ selk' and p*er*led wiþ latoun
In al þis world to seeken vp and do*un* 3252
Ther is no man so wys þat' couþe þenche
So gay a popelote or swich a wenche/

fful brighter was þe schynyng of hir hewe
Than in þe tour þe noble y-forged newe 3256
But of hir song it was so lowd and ȝerne
As any swalwe chitering on a berne/
Ther-to sche couþe skippe and make a game
As ony kyde or calf folwyng his dame 3260
hir mouþ was sweete as braket or þe meth
Or hoord of appeles layd in hay or heth
Wynsyng sche was as is a Ioly colt
long as a mast and vpright as a bolt 3264
A broche sche bar on hir loue coler
As brood as is þe boos of a bocler
hire schos were laced on hire legges hye
Sche was a primerole a pygges nye 3268
ffor eny lord to liggen in his bedde/
Or ȝet for eny good yeman to wedde
¶ Now sire and eft sire so bifel þe caas
That on a day þis heende Nicholas 3272
ffil wiþ þis ȝonge wijf to rage and playe
Whil þat hir housbonde was at Osenaye
As clerkes ben ful subtil and ful queinte
And priuely he caught hir by þe queynte [leaf 46, back]
And seyde I wis but if ich haue my wille
ffor derne loue of þe le*m*man I spille/
And held hir harde by þe haunche bones
And seyde le*m*man loue me wel al at ones 3280
Or I wol deyen al so god me saue
And sche sprong as a cold doþ in þe traue
And with hir hed sche wried faste awey
Sche seide I wil nat kisse þe by my fey 3284
Whi labbe q*uo*d ich labbe Nicholas
Or I wol crie out harrow and allas
Do wey ȝoure hondes for ȝoure curtesye
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crie 3288
And spak so faire and profred him so fast
That sche hir loue g*ra*unted him atte last

And swor hir oþ by sent Thom*as* of kent
That sche wolde ben at his comaundeme*nt* 3292
Whan þat sche may hir leysir wel aspye
Myn housbonde is so ful of Ialousye
That but I wayte wel and be priue
I woot right wel I nam but deed quoþ sche 3296
Ye moote ben ful derne as in þis caas
Nay þer-of kare ȝe nought q*uo*d Nicholas
A clerk hadde litherly biset his while
But if he couþe a carpunter begile 3300
And þus þey ben acorded and y-sworn
To wayte a tyme as I haue told biforn
Whan Nicholas hadde þis euerydel
And thakked hire aboute þe lendes wel 3304
he kist hir sweete and takþ his Sauterie
And playeþ faste and makeþ melodye
Than fil it þus þat to þe parissche cherche/
Cristes owne werkes for to werche 3308
This goode wijf wente on an haly day
hir forhed schon as bright as any day
So was it waissche whan sche leet hir werk
Now was þer of þat chirche a parissche clerk [leaf 47]
The which þat was y-cleped absolon
Crul was his heer and as þe gold it schon
And strouted as a fanne large and brode
fful streyte and euene lay his Ioly schode 3316
his rode was reed his eyhen gray as goos
Wiþ poules wyndow coruen in his schoos
In hoses rede he wente fetisly
I-clad he was ful smal and p*ro*purly 3320
Al in a kertell al of light waget
fful faire an þikke ben þe poyntz y-sett
And þer vpon he hadde a gay surplys
As whit as is þe blosme on þe Rys 3324
A merie child he was so god me saue
Wel couþe he laten blood or clippe or schaue

And make a charter of lond or an aquitance
In twenty maner coupe he trippe and daunce 3328
After þe scole of Oxenforde þo
And wiþ his legges casten to and fro
And playen songes on a smal rubible
Ther-to he song som tyme a lowde quynyble/ 3332
And as wel coupe he pleye on a giterne
In all þe toun nas brewhous ne tauerne
That he ne visited wiþ his solas
Ther any gaillard tappestere was 3336
But soth to sein he was somdel squaymous
Of fartyng and of speche daungerous
¶ This absolon þat Ioly was and gay
Goþ with a censer on þe haly day 3340
Sensyng þe wyfes of þe parische fast
And many a louely look on hem he cast
And namely on þis carpunteres wyf
To loke on hire him þought a mery lijf 3344
Sche was so p*ro*per and swete and swete and licorous
I dar wel sein if sche hadde ben a mous
And he a catte he wolde hire hente anoon
This parissche clerk þis ioly absolon [leaf 47, back]
haþ in his herte such a loue longynge
That of no wijf took he non offrynge
ffor curtesie he seide he wolde non
The moone whan it was night ful brighte schon 3352
And Absolon his giterne haþ I-take
ffor p*ar*amoure he þoughte for to wake
And forþ he goþ iolyf and amorous
Til he com to þe carpunteres hous 3356
A litel after cokkes had y-crowe
And dressed him vp by a schot wyndowe
Thas was vpon þe carpenteres walle
he syngeþ in his voys gentil and smalle 3360
Now dere lady if þi willes be
I prey yow þat ȝe wil Rewe on me

ffol wel acordant to his giternyng
This Carpenter awok and herde him syng 3364
And spak vnto his wijf and seyde anoon
What Alisoñ heris þou not absolon
That chaunteþ þus vnder oure boures walle
And sche answerde hir housbonde þer wiþ alle 3368
Yis god woot Ioh*a*n I here it eu*e*ry del
This passeþ forþ what wile ȝe bet þan wel
ffro day to day þis ioly Absolon
So woweþ hire þat him is woo bigon 3372
he wakeþ al þe night and al þe day
he kembede his lokkes brode and made hem gay
he woweþ hire by menes and brocage/
And swore he wolde ben hir oughne page/ 3376
he syngeþ brokking as a nightyngale
he sente hire pyment meth and spiced ale/
And wafres pypyng hoot out of þe gleede
And for sche was of town he profred meede 3380
ffor so*m*me folk wol be wo*n*nen for richesse
And so*m*me for strokes and so*m*me for gentilnesse
Som tyme to schewe his lightnesse and maystrie
he pleieth heraudes vpon a scaffold hye [leaf 48]
But what auayleþ him as in þis caas
Sche loueþ so þis heende Nicholas
That Absolon may blowe þe buckes horn
he ne haþ for his labour but a skorn 3388
And þus sche makeþ absolon here ape
And all his Ernest turneþ till a Iape
ffor soþ is þis prouerbe it is no lye
Men sein right þus alwey þey neighe slye 3392
makeþ þe ferre leef to be loth
ffor þough þat absolon be wood or wroþ
By cause þat he fer was from hire sight
þis neigh Nicholas stood in his light 3396
¶ Now bere ye wel heende Nicholas
ffor absolon may waille and synge allas

And so bifell it on a Saturday
This Carpunter was gon to Osenay 3400
And heende Nicholas and alisoñ
Acorded be to þis Conclusioñ
That Nicholas schal schapen hem a wile
This seely Ialous housbonde to by-gyle 3404
And if so be þe game wente aright
Sche scholde slepen in his arm al nyght
ffor þis was his desyr and hire also
And right anon wiþouten wordes mo 3408
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie
But doþ ful softe vnto his chambre carie
Boþe mete and drynke for a day or tweye
And to hire housbonde bad hir for to seye 3412
If þat he axed after Nicholas
Sche scholde say sche nyste wher he was
Of al þat day sche seigh him nought wiþ eye
Sche trowed þat he was in maladye 3416
ffor for no cry hir mayde couþe him calle
he nolde answere for noþing þat mighte falle
This passeþ forþ al þilke Saturday
That Nicholas stille in his Chambre lay [leaf 18, back]
And eet or sleep or dede what him liste
Til Sonday þat þe sonne goþ to reste
This sely carpunter haþ gret meruayle
Of Nicholas or what þing might him ayle 3424
And sayde I am adrad by seint Thomas
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas
God schilde þat he deide sodeinly
This world is now ful tykell sikerly 3428
I seigh to day a cors y-born to cherche
That now a monday last I saugh him werche
Go vp q*uo*d he vnto his knaue anon
Clepe at his dore or knocke with a stoon 3432
loke how it is and telle me boldely
This knaue goþ him vp ful sturdily

And at þe chambre dore whil þat he stood
he criede and knokkede as þat he were wood 3436
What how what do ȝe mayster Nicholay
how may ȝe sleepen al þe longe day
But al for nought he herde nought a word
An hole he fond ful lough vpon a bord 3440
Ther as þe catte was wont in for to creepe
And at þat hole he loked in ful deepe/
And atte last he hadde of him a sight
This nicholas sat euer capyng vpright 3444
As he hadde keked on þe newe moone
And doun he goþ and tolde his mayster soone
In what array he saugh þis ilke man
This Carpunter to blessen him bigan 3448
And seyde help vs seinte ffredeswide
A man woot litel what him schal betyde/
This man is falle with his astronomie
In som woodnesse or in som agonye 3452
I þought ay wel how þat it scholde be
Men scholde not knowe of goddes priuite
ȝe blessed be alwey a lewed man
That nought but oonly his bileeue can [leaf 49]
So ferd anoþer clerk with astronomie
he walked in þe feeldes for to prie
vppon þe sterres what þer schulde bifall*e*
Til he was in a Marle pit y-fall*e* 3460
he saugh nought þat but ȝit by seint Thom*as*
Me reweth sore of heende Nicholas
he schal be rated of his studyyng
If þat I may by Ih*esu* [1] heuene king [1 MS. Ihc]
Gete me a staf þat I may vnderspore
Whil þat þou Robyn heuest vp þe dore
he schal out of his studying as I gesse
And to þe chambre dore he gan him dresse 3468
his knaue was a strong carl for þe nones
And by þe hasp he heef it / of at oones

In to þe floor þe dore fill anon
This Nicholas sat' ay as stille as stoon 3472
And euere capede vpward in to the ayre
This Carpunter wende he were in despaire
And hent' him by þe schuldres mightyly
And schook' him harde and cryed spitously 3476
What Nicholas what' how looke a doun
Awake and þenk' on cristes passio*un*
I crouche þe from Elues and fro wightes
Ther-wiþ þe night' spell seyde he anon rightes 3480
Of' foure halues of' þe hous aboute
And on þe presschefold on þe dore wiþoute
Ih*es*u crist' and seynt' Benedight'
Blesse þis hous from eu*er*y wikkede wight' 3484
ffor þe nightes verye þe white Pate noster
Where wentestow þou seinte peteris suster
And atte laste þis heende Nicholas
Gan for to sike sore and seyde allas 3488
Schal al þe werld be lost' eft' sones now
This Carpenter answerde what' seist' þou
What' þink' on god as we doon men þat' swynke
This nicholas answerde feche me drynke [leaf 19, back]
And after wol I speke in priuitee
Of' certein þing' þat' toucheþ þe and me
I wil telle it non oþer man certeyn
This Carpenter goþ do*un* and comeþ agein 3496
And brought' of' mighty ale a large quart'
And whan þat' ech of' hem hadde dronken his part'
This Nicholas his dore faste schette
And doun þe Carpunter by him he sette 3500
And seyde Iohn myn hooste leef' and deere
Thou schalt' vpon my trouþe swere me heere
That' to no wight' þou schalt' þis counseil wreye
ffor it' is cristes counseill þat' I seie/ 3504
And if' þou telle it man þou art' forlore/
ffor þis vengance þou schalt' haue þ*er*fore

That' if' þou wreie me þou schalt' be wood
¶ Nay crist' forbede it for his holy blood 3508
Quod þo þis sely man I nam no labbe
Ne þough I seie I nam not' leef' to gabbe
Sey what' þou wolt' I schal it neuer telle
To child ne wijf' by him þat' hariede helle/ 3512
Now Iohan quod Nicholas I wil nou3t' lye
I haue I-founde in myn astrologie/
As I haue loked in þe moone bright'
That' now a monday next at quarter night 3516
Schal falle a Rayn and þat' so wilde *and* wood
That' half' so gret' was neuer Nowels flood
This world he seide in lasse þan in an hour
Schal al be dreynt' so hidous is þe schour 3520
Thus schal mankynde drenche and leese here lif
This Carpunter answerde allas my wijf'
And schal sche drenche allas myn alisoun
ffor sorwe of' þis he fell almost' a doun 3524
And seyde is þer no remedye in þis caas
Whi 3is for gode quod heende Nicholas
If' þou wolt' worchen after lore and red
Thou mayst' no3t' werken after þin oughne heed [leaf 50]
ffor þus seiþ Salamon þat' was ful trewe
Work' all by counseill and þou schalt' nought' rewe
And if' þou worken wolt' by good counseille
I vndertake wiþoute mast' or seile 3532
Yet' schal I saue hire and þe and me/
hast' þou nought' herde how saued was Noe
Whan þat' owre lord haþ warned him biforn
That' all þe world with water schulde be lorn 3536
3is quod þis Carponter ful 3ore ago
hastow not' herd quod Nicholas also
The sorwe of' Noe wiþ his felaschipe
Or þat' he mighte gete his wif' to schipe 3540
him hadde leuer I dar wel vndertake
At' þilke tyme þan all his weþeres blake

That sche hadde a schip hir self allon
And þer-fore wost þou what is best to doon 3544
This axeþ haste and of an hastyf þing
Men may nought preche or make tarying
Anon go gete vs faste in to þis Inne
A knedyng trough or elles a kemelynne 3548
ffor ech of vs but look þat þey ben large
In which men mowe swymme as in a barge
And han þer vitailles suffisaunt
But for a day fy on þe remenaunt 3552
The water schal aslake and gon a way
Aboute prime vpon þe nexte day
But Robyn may not wite of þis þi knaue/
Ne eek þy mayde gylle I may nought saue/ 3556
Axe nought why for þough þou axe me
I wol nought tellen goddes priuite
Sufficeþ þe but if þi wittes madde
To haue as gret a grace as noe hadde 3560
Thi wif schal I wel sauen out of doute
Go now þi wey and speed þe heer aboute/
But when þou hast for hire and þe and me
Y-geten vs þese knedyng tubbes þre [leaf 50, back]
Than schalt þou hang hem in þe rof ful hye
That noman of oure purueance espye
And whan þou þus hast don as I haue seyd
And hast oure vitailes faire in hem y-leyde 3568
And eek an ax to smyte þe corde a tuo
Whan þat þe water comeþ þat we may go
And broke an hole an heigh vpon þe gable
vnto þe gardeynward ouer þe stable 3572
That we may freely passen forþ oure wey
Whan þat þe grete schour is gon a wey
Thanne schalt þou swy*m*me as mery I vndertake
As doþ þe white doke after his drake 3576
Than wol I clepe how alisoñ how Ioon
Be merie for þe flood wol passe anon

And þou wolt sein haiłł maister Nicholay
Goode morwen I see þe wel for it is day 3580
And þanne schal we be lordes ałł oure lif
Of alle þe world as Noe and his wijf
But þat of oo þing I warne þe ful right
Be wel auysed on þat ilke night 3584
That we ben entred in to þe schippes boord
That noon of vs ne speke nought a word
Ne clepe ne crye but been in his preyere
ffor it is goddes oughne heeste deere 3588
Thy wijf and þou mot hange fer atwynne
ffor þat betwixe ȝou schal be no synne
No more in lokyng þan þer schal in dede
This ordinance is seid go god þe speede 3592
To morwe at night whan men ben ałł on sleepe
In to our knedyn tubbes wil we creepe
And sitten þer abidyng goddes grace
Go now þy wey I haue no lenger space 3596
To make of þis no lenger sermonyng
Men sein þus sende þe wise and sey no þing
þou art so wys it needeþ þe nought to teche
Go saue oure lijf and þat I þe beseche [leaf 51]
¶ This seely Carpunter goþ forþ his wey
fful ofte he seyde allas and weylawey
And to his wijf he tolde his prauitee
And sche was warr and knew it bet þan he 3604
What al þis queynte cast was for to seye
But naþeles sche ferde as sche wolde deye
And seyde allas go forþ þi weie anon
help vs to scape or we ben deede echon 3608
I am þi trewe verray wedded wijf
Go deere spouse and help to saue oure lijf
¶ lo which a gret þing is affectiõ
Men may dye of ymaginaciõ 3612
So deepe may impressions be take
This seely Carponter bygynneþ quake

him þenketh verraily þat he may se
Noe flood come walkyng as þe see 3616
To drenchen alisoñ his hony deere
he weepeþ wailleþ maketh sory cheere/
he sykeþ wiþ ful many a sory swogh
And goþ and geteþ him a knedyng trough 3620
And after a tubbe and a kemelyn
And priuily he sent hem to his In
And hyng hem in þe roof in priuite
his oughne hond he made eek leddres þre 3624
To clymben by þe ronges and þe stalkes
vnto þe tubbes hangyng in þe balkes
And hem vitailled boþe trough and tubbe
Wiþ bred and cheese and good ale in a Iubbe/ 3628
Suffisyng right ynough as for a day
But ar þat he hadde maad al þis array
he sent his knaue and eek his wenche also
vpon his neede to londoñ for to go 3632
And on þe monday whan it drough to night
he schette his dore wiþoute candel light
And dressed alle þing as it scholde be/
And schortly clomben vp alle þre/ [leaf 51, back]
Thei setten stille wel a forlong way
Now pater noster clum seide Nicholay
And Clum q*uo*d Ioñ and Clum seide alisoñ
This Carpunter seide his deuocioñ 3640
And stille he sitte and biddeþ his prayere
Awaityng on the rayn if he it heere
The deth sleepe for wery bysynesse
ffil on þis Carpunter right as I gesse 3644
Aboute corfew tyme or litel more
ffor trauaille of his gost he groneþ sore
And eft he routeþ for his heed myslay
Doun of þe laddre stalkeþ Nicholay 3648
And alisoñ ful softe a doun sche spedde
Wiþouten wordes mo þey gon to bedde

Ther as þe carpunter is wont to lye
Ther was þe reuel and þe melodye/ 3652
And þus lith alisoñ and Nicholas
In busynesse of merþe and of solas
Til þat þe belle of laudes gan to rynge
And the freres in þe chauncell gonne synge/ 3656
This parische clerk þis amorous absolon
That is for loue alwey so wo bigon
vpon þe monday was at Osenay
With compaignie him to desport and play 3660
And axed vpon caas a cloisterer
fful priuily after Iohñ þe Carpunter
And he drough him a part out of þe chirche
And seyde I not I saugh him heere nought werche 3664
Siþþe Saturday I trowe þat he be went
ffor tymber þere oure abbot haþ him sent
ffor he is wont for tymber for to go
And dwelle atte graunge a day or tuo 3668
Or elles he is at his hous certeyn
Wher þat he be I can nought soþly sein
This absolon ful ioly was and light
And þoughte now is tyme to wake al nyght [leaf 52]
ffor sikerly I saugh him nought styryng
Aboute his dore syn day bigan to spring
So mote I þriue I schal at cokkes crowe
fful priuily knokken as his wyndowe 3676
That stant ful lowe vpon his boures walle
To alisoñ now wol I tellen alle
My loue longyng for ȝit I schal not misse
That atte laste wey I schal hir kisse 3680
Som maner comfort schal I haue par fay
My mouþ haþ icched al þis longe day
That is a signe of kissyng atte leste
Al night me mette eek I was at a feeste 3684
Therfore I wol go sleepe an our or tweye
And al þe night þan wol I wol I wake and pleye

Whan þat þe ferste cok haþ crowe anon
vp rist þis Ioly louer absolon 3688
And him arrayeþ gay and poynt/ deuyse
But ferst he cheweþ grayn and likorise
To smellen swoote or he hadde kempt his here
vnder his tonge a trewe loue he beere/ 3692
ffor þer-by wende he to be gracious
he rowmeth to þe carpenteres hous
And stille he stant vnder þe schot wyndowe
vnto his brest it raught it was so lowe/ 3696
And softe he coughed wiþ a semy soun
What do ȝe hony combe swete alisoun
My faire brid my sweete synamome/
Awaketh le*m*man myn and spekeþ to me 3700
We[l] litel þenken ȝe vpon my woo
That for ȝoure loue I swete as I go
No wonder is þough þat I swelte and swete
I morne as doþ þe lambe after þe teete 3704
I-wys le*m*man I haue such loue longyng
That lik a turtel trewe is my moornyng
I may not ete namore þan a mayde/
Go fro þe wyndow Iakke fool sche sayde [leaf 52, back]
As help me god it wil not be com pame/
I loue anoþer and elles I were to blame/
Wel bette þan þe by Ih*e*su absolon
Go forþ þi wey or I wil caste a stoon 3712
And lete me slepe a twenty deuel way
Allas q*uo*d absolon and weyloway
That trewe loue was euer so yuel besette/
Than kisse me syn it may be no bette/ 3716
ffor ih*e*sus loue and for þe loue of me
Wolt þou þan go þi way þer-with q*uo*d sche
Ye certes le*m*man q*uo*d þis absolon
Than make þe redy q*uo*d sche I come anon 3720
[. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
This absolon doun sette him on his knees

And saide I am a lord at alle degrees 3724
ffor after þis I hope þer comeþ more
le*m*man þi grace and sweete brid þin ore
The wyndow sche vndoþ and þat in hast/
haue do quod sche com of and speed þe faste 3728
lest þat our neighebore þe espie
This absolon gan wipe his mouþ ful drye
Derk was þe night as piche or as þe cole
And at the wyndow out sche putte hire hole 3732
And absolon him fil no bet ne wers
But wiþ his mouþ he kiste hire naked ers/
fful sauorly er he were war of þis/
A bak he stert and þought it was amys/ 3736
ffor wel he wiste a wo*m*man haþ no berd
he felt a þing al rough and longe y-hered
And sayde fy allas what haue I do
Tehe q*uo*d sche and clapt þe wyndow to 3740
And absolon goþ forþ a sory pas
A berde a berd seide heende Nicholas
By goddes corpus þis goth faire and wel
This sely absolon herde it euery del 3744
And on his lippe he gan for anger byte
And to himself he seyde I schal þe quyte [leaf 53]
Who rubbeþ now who froteþ now his lippes
With dust with sond wiþ straw with cloþ wiþ chippes
But absolon þat seith ful ofte allas/
My soule bitake I to Saternas/
But me were leuere þan al þis toun q*uo*d he/
Of þis despite awroken for to be 3752
Allas quoþ he allas I ne hadde y-bleynt
his hote loue is cold and al yqueynt
ffor fro þat tyme þat he hadde kest hire ers
Of p*ar*amours he sette not a kers/ 3756
ffor he was heled of his maladie/
fful ofte p*ar*amoures he gan diffie
And weepe as doþ a child þat is y-bete/
A softe paas he wente ouer þe strete/ 3760

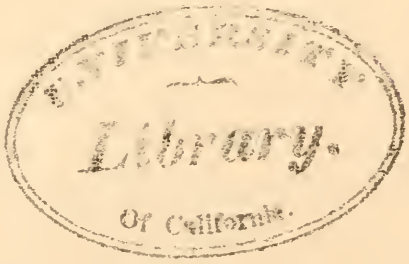
vntil a Smyth men clepen daun Geruays
That in his forge smythieþ plough harnays
he scharpeþ scharre and Culter bisyly.
This absolon knokkeþ al Esely 3764
And sayde vnto Geruays and þat anon
What who art þou it am I absolon
What absolon for cristes swete tree
Why ryse so raþe benedicite 3768
What eyleþ ȝou som gay gerl god it woot
haþ brought ȝou þus vpon þe viritoot
By seinte note ȝe wot wel what I me[ne]
This absolon ne roughte nat a bene 3772
Of all his pley no word a-gayn he gaf
he hadde more tow on his distaf
Than Geruays knew and sayde frend so deere
The hoote Culter in þe Chemenye heere 3776
As lene it me I haue þer-wiþ to done/
I wol bringe it agayn ful soone
Geruais answerde certes were it gold
Or in a poke nobles all vntold 3780
Thou scholdest haue as I am trewe smith
Ey cristes foo what wol ȝe don þer-with [leaf 53, back]
Ther-of *quod* absolon be as be may
I schal wel telle it þe to morwe day 3784
And caughte þe culter by þe colde stele
fful softe out aþ þe dore he gan to stele
And went vnto þe Carpenteres wal
he koughede first and knokkede þer wiþ al 3788
vpon þe wyndow right as he dede ere/
This alisoñ answerde who is þere
That knokkeþ as I warant it a þeef
Why nay quod he god woot my sweete leef 3792
I am þin absolon þi dereling
Of gold *quod* he I haue þe brought a ryng
My moder yaf it me so god me saue/
fful fyn it is and þer-to wel y-graue 3796

This wol I yiuen þe if þou me kisse
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse/
And þought he wolde amenden al þe Iape/
he schulde kisse his ers or þat he scape 3800
And vp þe wyndow dide he hastily
And out his ers he putte priuily
Ouer þe buttok to þe haunche bon
And þer-wiþ spak þis clerk þis absolon 3804
Spek swete brid I not wher þou art
This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart
As gret as it hadde ben a þonder dent
That wiþ þe strook he was almost y-blent 3808
And he was redy wiþ his Iren hoot
And Nicholas in þe ers he smoot
Of goþ þe skyn an hande brood aboute/
The hoote culter brenned so his toute/ 3812
And for þe smerte he wende for to dye
As he were wood for woo he gan to crye/
help water water help for goddes herte
This Carpunter out of his slomber sterte 3816
And herde on cryen watir as he were wood
And þought allas now comeþ Noweles flood [leaf 51]
And sette him vppe wiþoute wordes mo
And wiþ an ax he smot þe corde a tuo 3820
And doun goþ al he fond neyþer to selle/
No breed nor ale til he com to þe selle/
vpon þe floor and þer a swowen he lay
vp sterte hire alisoñ and Nicholay 3824
and cried out and harrow in þe strete
The neighebo*ur*es boþe smale and grete
In ronnen for to gauren on þis man
That a swowen lay boþe pale and wan 3828
ffor with þat falle he brosten haþ his arm
But stonde he moste vnto his oughne harm
ffor whan he spak he was anon bore do*un*
With heende Nicholas and aliso*un* 3832

They tolden eu*er*y man þat' he was wood
he was a-gast' so of' þe Nowels flood
Thurgh fantasie þat' of' his vanite
he hadde y-bought' him knedyng' tubbes þre 3836
And hadde hem hanged in þe roof' aboue
And þat' he preyed him for goddes loue
To sitten in þe roof' p*ar* companye
The folk' gan laughen at' his fantasie 3840
And to þe roof' þay loken and þei cape
And torned all his harm vnto a Iape
ffor what' so þis Carpenter answerde
It' was for nought' no men his resoñ herde 3844
With oþes grete he was so sworn a doun
That' he was holden wood in all þat' toun
ffor eu*er*y clerk' anon right' heeld with o*þer*
They seyde þe man is wood my leeue bro*þer* 3848
And eu*er*y wight' gan laughen at' his strif'
Thus swyued was þe Carpunteres wijf'
ffor all his keepyng' and his Ialousye/
And absolon haþ kist' hir neþer yhe 3852
And Nicholas is scalded in his toute//
This tale is don and god saue al þe route [leaf 54, back]

¶ Explicit fabula Molendinarij

[*No gap in the MS.*]



¶ Here bygynneþ þe Reeues tale

Whan folk han laughen at þis nyce cas
Of absolon and heende Nicholas ¶ C°. iij°.
Diuerse folk diuersely þey seyde
But for þe more part þei lough̄ and pleyde
Ne at þis tale I saugh noman him greeue
But it were oonly Osewold þe Reeue 3860
By cause he was of Carpenteres craft
A litel Ire is in his herte laft
he gan to grucche and blamen it a lite
So þe ik q*uo*d he ful wel couþe I þe quyte 3864
With bleryng of a proud melleres ye
If þat me liste to speke of Ribaudie
But yk am old me list not pley for age
Gras tyme is don my fodder is forage/ 3868
This white top writeþ myn olde ȝeres
myn herte is also mouled as myn heeres
But if I fare as doþ an open ers
That ilke fruyt is euer leng*er*e þe wers 3872
Til it be roten in mullok or in stree/
We olde men I drede so fare we
Til we be roten can we nought be ripe
We hoppen alwey whil þe world wil pipe 3876
ffor in oure wille þer stikeþ euer a naile
To haue an hoor heer and a greene taile
As haþ a leek for þough̄ oure might be gon
Oure wille desireþ folie euer in oon 3880
ffor whan we may nought doon þan wole we speke
yet in oure asschen olde is fyr y-reke
ffoure gleedes han we whiche I schal deuyse/
Auauntyng lyuyng anger couetyse 3884
This foure sparkes longeþ vnto eelde
Oure olde lymes now wel ben vnwelde

But wil ne schal nat failen þat is soþ
And yet haue I alway a Coltes toþ [leaf 55]
As many a ȝeer as it is passen henne
Syn þat my tappe of lif bygan to renne
ffor sikerly whan I was born anoon
Deþ drough þe tappe of lijf and leet it goon 3892
And euer siþen haþ so þe tappe y-ronne
Til þat almost al empty is þe tonne
The streem of lijf now droppeþ on þe chimbe.
The sely tonge may wel rynge and chymbe. 3896
Of wrecchedenesse þat passed is ful yore
With old folk saue dotage is nomore/
Whan þat oure oost hadde herde þis sermonyng
he gan to speken as loodly as a king 3900
he seyde what amounteþ all þis witte
What schal we speke alday of holy writte
The deuel maade a reeue for to preche
Or of a Soutere schipman or a leche 3904
Sey forþ þi tale and tarie nought þe tyme
lo deppeford and it is halfwey prime
lo Grenewich þat many a schrewe is Inne
It were al tyme þi tale for to begynne 3908
Now sires q*uo*d þis Osewold þe Reeue
I pray you alle þat ye nought ȝou greeue
Thou I answere and somdel sette his houve
ffor leueful it is with force force of schouve 3912
This dronken mellere haþ y-told vs heere
how þat bygyled was a Carpuntere/
P*er*auenture in scorn for I am oon
And by youre leeue I schal him quyte anoon 3916
Right in his cherles termes wil I speke/
I preye to god his nekke mote tobreke
he can wel in myn ȝe sen a stalke
But in his owne he can nought seen a balke/ ¶ ffabula

[*No gap in the MS.*]

AT Trumpyngtoñ nought fer fro Cantabregge
Ther goþ a brook and ouer þat a bregge
vppon þe whiche brook þer stant a Melle 3923
And þis is verray soþ þat I ȝou telle [leaf 55, back]
A meller was þer duellyng many a day
As any pecok he was proud and gay
Pype he couþe and fissche and nettes beete
And torne coppes and wel wrastle and scheete/ 3928
Ay by his belt he bar a long Panade
And of a swerd ful trenchant was þe blade/
A Ioly popper bar he in his pouche
Ther was noman for peril durste him touche/ 3932
A scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose
Round was his face and Camuse was his nose/
As pyled as an ape was his sculle
he was a market betere atte fulle 3936
Ther was no wight þat dorst hand on him legge
But if he swor he scholde anon abegge
A þeef he was forsoþe of corn and mele
And þat a sleigh and vsaunt for to stele 3940
his name was hoote deynous Symkyn
A wijf he hadde come of noble kyn
The parsoun of þe toun hir fader was/
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras 3944
ffor þat Symkyn scholde in his blood allye
Sche was y-fostred in a Nonnerie/
ffor symkyn wolde no wyf as he sayde
But sche were wel ynorissched and a mayde/ 3948
To sauen his estate of yomanrie/
And sche was proud and pert as is a pye
A ful fair sight was it vppon hem tuo
On halidayes biforn hire wolde he go 3952

Wiþ his typet wounden aboute his heede/
And sche cam after in a gyte of reede/
And Symkyn hadde hosen of þe same
Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but dame 3956
Was non so hardy þat wente by þe way
That wiþ hire dorste or ones rage or play
But if he wolde be slain of Symkyn
With panade or with knyf or boydekyn [leaf 56]
ffor Ielous folk ben p*er*ilous eueremo
Algate þei wolde here wyues wenden so
And eek for sche was somdel smoterlich
Sche was as digne as water in a dich 3964
As ful of hoker and of bisemare
hire þoughte þat a lady schulde hir spare
What for hire kynrede and hire nortelrie
That sche hadde lerned in þe nonnerie 3968
A doughter hadde þe betwixe hem tuo
Of twenty ȝer wiþouten eny moo
Sauyng a childe þat was of half ȝeer age
In cradel it lay it was a p*ro*per page/ 3972
This wenche þikke and wel ygrowen was
Wiþ Camoys nose and eyen grey as glas
Wiþ buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye
But right fair was hire heer I wol nought lye 3976
¶ The p*ar*soñ of þe toun for sche was fair
In purpos was to maken hire his hair
Boþe of his catel and his mesuage
And strange he made it/ of hire mariage 3980
his purpos was for to bistowe hire hye
In to som worþi blood of auncetrie/
ffor holy chirches good moot ben dispended
On holy cherche blood þat is descended 3984
Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure/
þough þat þe holy chirche scholde deuoure
Gret soken haþ þis meller out of doute
Wiþ whete and malt of all þe land aboute/ 3988

And nameliche þer was a gret collegge
Men clepeþ þe Soler halle of Cantabregge
þere was here whete and eek here malt y-grounde
And on a day it happeþ in a stounde 3992
Syk lay þe manciple on a maladie/
Men wenden wisly þat he schulde dye
ffor which þis mellere stal boþe mele and corn
An hundred tyme more þanne biforn [leaf 56, back]
ffor þer biforn he stal but curteysly
But now he was a theef outrageously
ffor which þe wardein chidde and made fare/
But þer-of sette þe meller nought a tare/ 4000
he crakede bost and swor it was nought so/
Thanne were þere ȝonge scoleres tuo
That dwelten in þe halle of which I seye
Testyf þey were and lusty for to pleye 4004
And oonly for here mirthe and reuerye
vpon þe wardein bisily þei crye
To ȝif hem leue but a litel stounde
To go to melle and seen here corn y-grounde 4008
And hardily þei dorste leye here nekke
The mellere schulde nat stele hem half a pekke/
Of corn ne by sleight ne by force hem Reue
And atte laste þe wardeyn yaf hem leue 4012
Iohñ hight þat oon and alayn hight þat oþer
Of oo toun were þei born þat highte strother
ffer in the North I can not telle where
This alayn makeþ redy aꝗ his gere 4016
And on an hors þe sak he cast anon
fforþ goþ alayn þe clerk and also Iohñ
Wiþ good swerd and wiþ bokeler by his syde
Iohñ knew þe wey him needede no guyde/ 4020
And atte melle þe sak a doun he layth
Alain spak first. alhail Symoñ in faiþ
how fares þi faire doughter and þi wyf
Alayn welcome q*uo*d Symkyn by my lyf 4024

And Iohn also how now what do ȝe heere
By god q*uo*d Iohn Symond neede haþ no peere
him bihoues serue himself þat has na swayn
Or elles he is a folt as clerkes sayn 4028
Oure manciple I hope he wil be deed
Swa werkes him ay þe wanges in his heed
And þerfore is I come and eek alayn
To grynde oure corn and carie it ham agayn [leaf 57]
I pray you speedes vs heithen þat ȝe may
It schal be don quod Symkyn by my fay
What wil ȝe doon whil þat it is in hande
By god right by þe hoper wil I stande 4036
Quoþ Ioh*a*n and se how gates þe corn gas Inne
ȝit saugh I neuer by my fader kynne
how þat þe hoper wagged til and fra
Alayn answerde Iohn and wiltow swa 4040
Than wil I be bynepe by my croune
And se how gates þe mele falles a doune
In-til þe trough þat sal be my disporte
Q*uo*d Iohn in faath I may ben of ȝour sorte 4044
I is as ille a melle as ere ȝe
This mellere smylede at here nycete
And þought al þis nys don but for a wile
They wene þat no man hem may begyle 4048
But by my prift yit schal I blere here ye
ffor al þe sleight in here philosophie
The more queinte crekes þat þay make/
The more wol I stele whan I take 4052
In stede of flour ȝit wol I yeue hem brenne/
The grettest clerkes ben nought þe wisest menne
As whilom to þe wolf þus spak þe mare
Of all here arte counte I nouȝt a tare/ 4056
¶ Out of þe dore he goþ ful priuely
Whan þat he saugh his time softely
he lokeþ vp and doun til he haþ founde
The clerkes hors þer as it stood ybounde 4060

Behynde þe mille vnder a leuesel
And to þe hors he goþ him faire and wel
he strepeþ of' þe bridel right' anoon
And whan þe hors was laus he gynneþ goon 4064
Toward þe fen þare wilde mares renne/
And forth with wehe þorugh þikke and þorugh̄ þenne
This meller goþ agayn no word he sayde
But' doþ his note and wiþ hise clerkes pleyde [leaf 57, back]
Til þat' hire corn was faire and wel y-grounde
And whan þe mele is sakked and y-bounde
This Iohn̄ goþ out' and fynt' his hors away
And gan to crye harrow and weylaway 4072
Oure hors is lost' Alayn for goddes banes
Steppe on þi feet' com of' man al at' anes
Allas oure wardein has his palfray lorn
This aleyn al forgat' boþe mele and corn 4076
Al was out' of' his mynde his housbondrye
What' whilk' wey is he gon he gan to crye
The wyf' cam leepyng' inward at' a ren
Sche seyde allas ȝour hors goth in þe fen 4080
With wilde mares as faste as he may goo
Vnthank' come on his hand þat' bond him so
And he þat' bettre scholde haue knyt' þe reyne
Allas q*uo*d Iohn̄ Alayn for cristes peyne 4084
lay doun þi swerd and I wol myn alswa
I is ful swift' god wat' as is a Ra
By goddes harte he sal nouȝt scape vs baþe
Why ne had þou put' þe caple in þe lathe 4088
Ilhaille by godde alayn þou is a fonne
Thise sely clerkes han fulfaste y-ronne
Toward þe fen boþe alayn and eek' Iohn̄
And whan þe Mellere seigh þat' þei were gon 4092
he half' a buisschel of' here corn haþ take
And bad his wijf go knede it' in a cake
And seide I trowe þe clerkes weren aferd
Yet' kan a mellere make a clerkes berd 4096

ffor all his art' yet' lat' hem gon here weye
Lo where he goþ ye lat' þe children pleye
They gete him nought' so light'ly by my croun
Thise seely clerkes rennen vp and doun 4100
With keep. keep. stand. stand. iossa. warderere /
Ga whistel þou and I schal keepe him heere
But' schortly til it' was verray night'
They couþe nought' þough þei dede all here might' [leaf 58]
here capel cacche he ran alwey so faste
Til in a diche þei caught' him atte laste
Wery and wet' as beest' is in þe rayn
Comeþ seely Iohn and with him comþ alayn 4108
¶ Allas q*uo*d Iohn þe day þat' I was born
Now ere we dryuen til hething' and til scorn
Oure corn is stole men wil vs fooles calle
Boþe þe wardein and oure felawes alle 4112
And namely þe meller weylawey
Thus pleyneþ Ioh*a*n as he goþ by þe wey
Toward þe melle and bayard in his hond
The meller sittyng' by þe fyr he fond 4116
ffor it' was nyght' and ferþer might' he nought'
But' for þe loue of' god þei him bisought
Of herberwe and of' eese as for here peny
The mellere seyde agayn if' þer be eny 4120
Such as if is ȝit schal ȝe haue ȝoure part'
Myn hous is streit' but' ȝe han lerned art'
ȝe can by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of' twenty foote of' space 4124
lat' se now if' þis place mow suffise
Or make it rowmere with speche as is ȝour*e* gyse
Now Symond seyde þis Iohn by seint Cuthberd
As is þou mery and þat' is faire answerd 4128
I haue herd say men sal take of' tua þinges
Swilk' as he fyndes or take swilk' as he brynges/
But' specially I pray þe ooste deere
Gete vs som mete and drynk' and mak' vs cheere 4132

And we wol payen trewly atte fulle
With empty handes men may naan haukes tulle
Lo heer oure siluer reedy for til spende
This meller to þe toun his doughter sende 4136
ffor ale and breed and rosted hem a goos
And boond here hors it scholde namore go loos
And in his owne chambre he made a bedde
With scheetes and wiþ chalons faire y-spredde [leaf 58, back]
Nought' from his oughne bed ten foote or twelue/
his doughter hadde a bed al by hir selue/
Right' in þe same chambre by and by
It' mighte be no bette and cause why 4144
Ther was no romer herberwe in þe place
þey soupen and þey speken hem of' solace
And drynken euere strong ale atte beste
A-boute mydnygh̄t' wente þei to reste 4148
Wel haþ þe mellere vernysshed his heed
fful pale he was for-drunken and nouȝt' reed
he yexeth and he spekeþ þurgh̄ þe nose/
As he were on þe quakke or on þe pose/ 4152
To bedde he goþ and with him goþ his wijf
As eny Iay he light' was and Iolif'
So was hire Ioly whistel wel y-wette
The cradell at' hire beddes feet' is sette/ 4156
To rokken and yeue þe childe to souke
And whan þat' dronken was al in þe crouke
To bedde wente þe doughter right' anoon
To bedde goþ Alayn and also Ioh̄n̄ 4160
Ther was nomore þem needede no dwale
This meller haþ so wisely bibbed ale
That as an hors he snorteþ in his slepe
Ne of' his tayl behynde he took' no keepe 4164
his wijf' bar him a burdon̄ a ful strong'
Men mighten heere here routyng' a furlong'
The wenche routeþ eek *par* compaignie
Alayn þe clerk' þat' herde þis melodye 4168

he pokede Iohn and seyde sleepist þou
herdestow euer slik a sang ar now
lo swilk a couplyng is bitwixe hem alle
A wilde fyr on þair bodies falle 4172
ho herkned euer slik a ferly þing
Ye þai sall haue þe flour of yll endyng
This lange night þer tydes me na reste/
But 3it na force al schal be for þe beste [leaf 59]
ffor Iohn seide als euer mote I priue
If þat I may yon wenche wol I swyue
Som esement haþ lawe schapen vs
ffor Iohn þer is a lawe þat seith þus 4180
That if a man in a poynt be agreeued
That in anoþer he schal be releeued
Oure corn is stolen soþly it is no nay
And we han had an ylle fitte to day 4184
And syn I schal haue noon amendement
Agayn my losse I wol haue esement
By goddes sale it sal nan oþir be
This Iohn answerde Alayn so mot I þe 4188
The meller is a perilous man he sayde
And if þat he out of his slape abrayde
he mighte don vs boþe a vilanye
Alayn answerde I counte him nought a flye 4192
And vp he rist and by þe wenche he crepte
This wenche lay vpright and faste slepte
Til he so neigh was or sche mighte spye
That it hadde been to late for to crye 4196
And schortly for to seyn þey were at oon
Now play alayn for I wol speke of Ioon
This Iohn liþ stille a forlong wey or tuo
And to himself he makeþ rouþe and wo 4200
Allas quod he þis is a wikke Iape
Now may I sayn þat I is but an ape
3et haþ my felaw somwhat for his harm
he has þe myllers doughter in his arm) 4204

he auntred him and haþ his needes spedde
And I lye as a drafˢ sakˢ in my bedde
And whan þis Iape is told anoþer day
I schal be holde a daffe a Cokenay 4208
I wol arise and aunter it by my faith
vnhardy is vnseely as men saith
And vp he ros and softely he wentˢ
vnto þe cradiłł and in his hand it hent [leaf 59, back] 4212
And bar it softe vnto his beddes feet
Sone after. þe wif hire routyngˢ lectˢ
And gan to wake and went hire outˢ to pisse
And com agayn and gan hir cradel mysse 4216
And groped heer and þer but sche fond noon
Allas quod sche I hadde almostˢ mys goon
I hadde almostˢ goon to þe clerkes bedde
Ey benedicite þan hadde I foule y-spedde 4220
And forþ sche goþ til sche þe cradil fond
Sche gropeþ alwey forþer with hire hond
And fond þe bed and þoughte noughtˢ butˢ good
By cause þatˢ þe cradel by it stood 4224
And nyste wher sche was for it was derkˢ
Butˢ faire and wel sche crepe in to þe clerkˢ
And lith ful stille and wolde haue caughtˢ a slepe
With-Inne a while þis Iohñ þe clerkˢ vp lepe 4228
And on þis goode wijfˢ he leiþ on sore
So mery a fitte ne hadde sche notˢ ful yore
he prikeþ harde and deepe as he were madde
This Ioly lyfˢ han þise tuo clerkes ladde 4232
Til þatˢ þe þridde cokˢ bygan to synge
Aleyn wax wery in þe dawenynge
ffor he hadde swonken alł þe longe nyghtˢ
And sayde far wel Malyn sweete wighł 4236
The day is come I may no lenger byde
Butˢ euermoo wher so I go or ryde
I am þin oughne clerkˢ so haue I hele
Now deere lem*m*an q*uo*d sche go far wele 4240

But or þou go oo þing I wol þe telle
Whan þat þou wendest homward by þe melle
Right at þe entre of þe dore behynde
Thou schalt a cake of half a busshel fynde 4244
That was y-maked of þin oughne mele
Which þat I hilpe my sire for to stele
And goode le*m*man god þe saue and keepe/
And with þat word almost sche gan to weepe [leaf 69] 4248
Alayn vprist and þought or þat it dawe/
I wol go creepen in by my felawe/
And fond þe cradel wiþ his hond anon
By god þought he al wrang I haue mysgon 4252
Myn heed is toty of my swynk/ to nyght
That makeþ me þat I go nought aright
I wot wel by þe cradel I haue mysgo
here lith þe meller and his wijf also 4256
And forth he goþ on twenty deuelway
vnto þe bed þer as þe meller lay
he wende haue cropen by his felawe Iohn̄
And by þe mellere in he creep anoon 4260
And caught him by þe necke and softe he spak
he seyde þou Iohn̄ þou swyneshed awak
ffor cristes sawle and heer a noble game/
ffor by þat lord þat called is saint Iame 4264
As I haue þries in þis schorte night
Swyued þe mellers doughter bolt vprigh[t]
Whil þou hast as a coward ben agast
þe false harlot q*uo*d þe meller hast 4268
A fals traitour false clerk q*uo*d he
þou schalt be ded by goddes dignite
Who durste be so bolde to disparage
My doughter þat is comen of such lynage 4272
And by þe þrote bolle he caught alayn
And he hent him dispitously agayn
And on þe nose he smot him with his fiste/
Doun ran þe bloody streen vpon his briste 4276

And in þe floor with nose and mouth to-broke
þei walwe as doþ tuo pigges in a poke
And vp þai gon and doun a-gayn anoon
Til þat' þe meller spurned at' a stoon 4280
And doun he fel bakward vpon his wijf'
That' wiste noþing' of þis nyce strijf'
ffor sche was falle a sleepe a litel wigħt'
With Ioħñ þe clerk' þat waked hadde al þe night' [leaf 60, back]
And with þe falle out of' hir sleep sche brayde
help holy cros of bromeholm sche sayde/
In manus tuas lord to þe I calle
Awake Symond þe feend is on me falle 4288
Myn herte is broken help I nam but' ded
Ther liþ on vp my wombe and vp myn heed
help Symkyn for þe false clerkes fighte
This Ioħñ starte vp as fast' as euer he mighte 4292
And grasped by þe walles to and fro
To fynde a staf' and sche stert' vp also
And knew þe estris bet' þan did þat' Ioħñ
And by þe wal a staf' sche fond anon 4296
And saugh a litel schymeryng' of' a light/
ffor at' an hole in schoon þe moone bright'
And by þat' light' sche saugh hem boþe tuo
But' sikerly sche nyste who was who 4300
But' as sche saugh a whit' þing' in hir eye
And whan sche gan þis white þing' aspye
Sche wende þe clerk' had wered a voluper
And wiþ þe staf' sche drough ay ner and ner 4304
And wende han hitte þis alayn atte fulle
And smot' þe meller on þe pilede skulle
That' doun he goth and cryed harrow I dye
This clerkes beet' him weel and lect' him lye 4308
And greyþen hem and tooke here hors anon
And eek' here mele and on here wey þey goon
And atte Mille yet' þai toke here cake/
Of' half' a busschel flour ful wel y-bake 4312

Thus is þe proude Meller wel y-bete
And haþ y-lost þe gryndyng[t] of[t] þe whete
And payed for þe soper eu*er*y dele/
Of[t] Alayn and of[t] Iohn þat[t] bette him weel 4316
his wyf[t] is swyued and his doughter als/
lo swich it is a mellere to be fals
And þerfore þis p*rouer*be is seyd ful soth
him þar nat[t] weene wel þat[t] yuel doþ [leaf 61] 4320
A gilour schal himself[t] begyled be/
And god þat[t] sitteþ highe in mageste/
Saue all þis companye grete and smale
Thus haue I quytte þe meller in my tale 4324

[*No gap in the MS.*]

The Cook[t] of london whil þe Reue spak[t]
ffor ioye he þoughte he clawed him on þe bak[t]
ha ha q*uo*d he for cristes passioun
This meller haþ a scharp conclusioun 4328
vpon his argument of[t] herbergage
We[ll] seide Salamon in his langage/
Ne bryng[t] nat euery man in to þin hous
ffor herberwyng[t] be night[t] is p*er*ilous 4332
Wel oughte a man auysed for to be
Whom þat[t] he broughte in to his priuite
I praie to god so yeue me sorwe and care
If[t] euere sithen I highte hogge of[t] of[t] ware 4336
herde I mellere bettre y-set a werke
he hadde a Iape of[t] malice in þe derke/
And þerfore if[t] ȝe vouche sauf[t] to heere/
But[t] god forbede þat[t] we stynte heere 4340
A tale of[t] me þat[t] am a pouere man
I wol yow telle as wel as euer I can
A litel Iape þat[t] fil in oure Citee
Oure oost[t] answerde and seide I g*ra*unte it þe 4344
Now telle on Roger loke þat[t] it[t] be good
ffor many a paste hast þou latyn blood
And many a Iakke of[t] Douer hast þou sold
That[t] haþ ben twyes hoot[t] and twyes cold 4348
Of[t] many pilgrym hastow cristes curs
ffor of[t] þy p*er*sely ȝit[t] þey fare þe wors
þat[t] þei haue eten wiþ þe stubbul goos
ffor in þy schoppe is many a flye loos 4352
Now tel on gentil Roger by þi name
But[t] yet I preye þe be not[t] wroþ for game
A man may say ful soth in game and play
Thou seist[t] ful soþ q*uo*d Roger by my fay [leaf 61, back] 4356

But soþ play quad play as þe flemyng seith
And þerfore herry baillyf by þi feith
Be þou nouȝt wroth or we departen heere
Though þat my tale be of an Ostelleere 4360
But naþeles I wol not tellen it ȝit
But or we parte I-wys þou schalt be quyt
And þer wiþ al he lough and made cheere/
And saide his tale as ȝe schal after heere 4364

[*No gap in the MS.*]

Incipit fabula — C^m iiij^m

A Prentys whilom dwelled in oure Citee
And of^t a craft^t of^t vitaillers was he
Gaillard he was as goldfynch in þe schawe
Broun as a berye a p*ro*pur schort^t felawe/ 4368
Wiþ lokkes blake y-kempt^t ful fetysly
Daunce he couthe so wel and Iolyly
That he was cleped Perkyn Reuolour
he was as ful of^t loue p*ar*amour 4372
As is þe hyue ful of^t hony sweete
Wel was þe wenche with him mighte meete
At^t euery brydale wolde he synge and hoppe
he louede bet^t þe tauerne þan þe schoppe 4376
ffor whan þer any rydyng^t was in chepe
Out^t of^t þe schoppe þider wolde he leepe
Til þat^t he hadde al þe sight^t y-seyn
And daunced wel wolde he not^t come ageyn 4380
And gadered him a meyne of^t his sorte
To hoppe and synge and maken such desporte
And þere þei setten steuene for to mete
To pleyen atte dys in such a streete 4384
ffor in þe toun nas þer no prentys
That^t fairere couþe caste a paire of^t dys :
Than P*er*kyn couþe and þer-to he was fre
Of^t his dispense in place of^t priuite/ 4388
That^t fond his maister wel in his chaffare/
ffor ofte tyme he fond his box ful bare
ffor sikerly a prentys Reuelour [leaf 62]
That^t haunteþ dys ryot^t or p*ar*amour 4392
his maister schal it^t in his schoppe abeye
Al haue he not^t part^t of^t þe menstralcye
ffor theft^t and riot^t þei ben conuertible
Al conne he play on gyterne or Rubible 4396

Reuel and trouthe as in a lough degre
þey been ful wroþe alday as men may se
This Iolif prentys with his maister bood
Til he were neigh out of his prentyshood 4400
Al were he snybbed boþe erly and late
And som tyme lad with Reuel to Newgate
But atte last his mayster him biþoughte
vpon a day whan he his paper soughte 4404
Of a p*ro*uerbe þat seiþ þis same word
Wel bette is roten appul out of hord
þan þat it rotye al þe remenant
So fareþ it by þe riotous seruant 4408
It is ful lasse harm to late it pace
þanne he schende alle þe s*er*uantȝ in þe place
Therfore his mayster ȝaf him a quitance
And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance 4412
And þus þis Ioly prentys hadde his leue
Now lat him riote al þe night or leue
And for þer nys no þeef wiþouten a lowke
That helpeþ him to wasten and to sowke/ 4416
Of þat he brybe can or borwe may
Anon he sente his bedde and his array
vnto a Coup*er*e of his owne sorte
That louede dys and Reuel and disporte 4420
And hadde a wyf þat heeld for contynance/
A schoppe / and swyued for hire sustynance.

[*No break in the MS.*]

APPENDIX TO GROUP A.

Library of California

[THE SPURIOUS TALE OF GAMELYN.]

Incipit ffabula/

LIthen & lestenep and herkenep aright
And ȝe schulle heeren of a doughty knight
Sire Iohn of Boundys was his name
he coupe of norture and mochil of game. 4
Thre sones pe knight hadde and with his body he hem wan
The eldest was a moche schrewe and sone he bigan [leaf 62]
his breperen loued wel here fader and of him were agast
The eldest deserueþ his faderes curs & hadde it atte last 8
The goode knight his fader lyued so yore
That deþ was comen him to and handlid him ful sore/
The goode knight cared sore sik þer he lay
how hise children schulde lyuen after his day 12
he hadde ben wyde wher but non housbond he was
Alle þe lond þat he hadde it was verrey purchas
ffayn he wolde it were dressed among hem alle
That eche of hem hadde his part as it mighte falle 16
Tho sente he in to contre after wise knightes
To helpen delen his londes and dressen hem to rightes
he sent hem word by *lett*res þey scholden hyȝe blyue
If þey wolde speke wiþ him whil he was on lyue 20

Tho þe knightes herden seck' þat' he lay
hadde þei no reste neiþer night' ne day
Til þei comen to him þer he lay stille
On his deþ bedde to abyde goddes wille 24
Thanne seyd þe goode knight' syk' þer he lay
lordes I ȝou warne for soþe wiþouten nay
I may no lengere lyuen heer in þis stounde
ffor þorugh goddes wille deth drawe þ me to grounde/ 28
Ther nas noon of' hem all þat' herde him aright
That' þay hadden reuþe of' þat ilke knight'
And seyde sire for goddes loue dismaye ȝou nought'
God may don boote of' bale þat' is now y-wrought' 32
Than spak' þe goode knight' sike þer he lay
Boote of' bale god may sende I wot' it is no nay
But' I beseke ȝou knightes for þe loue of' me
Goþ and dresseth my lond among' my sones þre 36
And for þe loue of' god deleþ hem nat' amys
And forȝeteþ nought' Gamelyn my ȝonge sone þat' is
Takeþ heede to þat' oon as wel as to þat' oþer
Seelde ȝe see ony heir helpen his broþer 40
Tho leeten þey þe knight' lyen þat' was not in hele [leaf 63]
And wenten in to counseill his londes for to dele/
ffor to delen hem all to oon was here þought
And for gamelyn was yongest' he scholde haue nought' 44
Alle þe lond þat' þer was þai dalten it it' tuo
And leeten Gamelyn þe ȝonge wiþoute lond go
And ech of' hem seyde to oþer ful loude
his breþeren mowe ȝiue him lond whan he good coude 48
Whan þei hadde deled þe lond at' here wille
Thei camen to þe knight' þere he lay ful stille
And tolden him anon) how þei hadden wrought
And þe knight' þer he lay liked it' right' nought' 52
Than seide þe knight' by seint' Martyn
ffor al þat' ȝe haue don ȝit' is þe lond myn
ffor goddes loue neighebours stondeþ alle stille
And I wol dele my lond right' after my wille/ 56

Iohn myn eldeste sone schal haue plowes fyue
That was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyue
And my myddelest sone fyue plowes of londe
That I halp for to geten with my right honde 60
And all myn oþer purchas of londes and leedes
That I bequeþe Gamelyn and all my goode steedes
And I beseke ȝou goode men þat lawe conne of londe
ffor Gamelynes loue þat my bequeste stonde 64
Thus dalte þe knight his lond by his day
Right on his deþ bedde sik þer he lay
And sone afterward he lay stoon stille
And deyde whan tyme com as it was cristes wille 68
Anon as he was deed and vnder gras graue
Sone þe oldere broþer gylede þe yonge knaue
he took in to his hond his lond and his leede
And Gamelyn himselue to cloþen and to feede 72
he cloþed him and fedde him yuel and eek wroþe
And leet his londes and his houses boþe
his parkes and his woodes and dede no þing wel
And sethen he it aboughte on his faire fel 76
So longe was Gamelyn in his broþeres halle [leaf 63, back]
ffor þe strengeste of good þei douteden him alle
Ther was non þer-Inne nowþer ȝong ne olde
That wolde wraþþe Gamelyn were he neuer so bolde 80
Gamelyn stood on a day in his broþeres ȝerde/
And bygan with his hond to handlen his berde
he þought on his londes þat layen vnsawe
And his faire Okes þat doun were drawe 84
his parkes were broken and his deere reued
Of all his goode steedes non was him bileued
hise houses were vnhiled and ful yuel dight
Tho þoughte Gamelyn it wente nought aright 88
Afterward cam his broþer walkynge þare
And seyde to Gamely is oure mete yare
Tho wraþþed him Gamelyn and swor by goddes book
þou schat go bake þi self I wol not be þi cook 92

how broþer Gamelyn / how answerest þou now
Thou spake neuer such a word as þou dost now
By my faiþ sayde Gamelyn now me þinkeþ neede
Of all þe harmes þat I haue I took neuer are heede 96
My parkes ben y-broken and my deer bireued
Of myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileued
Alle þat my fader me biquaþ al goþ to schame
And þer fore haue þou goddes curs broþer by þy name 100
Thanne bispak his broþer þat rape was of rees
Stond stille gadelyng and hold right þi pees/
Thou schalt be fayn for to haue þi mete and þi wede
What spekest þou Gamelyn of lond oþer of leede 104
Than seyde Gamelyn þe child þat was ying
Cristes curs mote he haue þat clepeþ me gadelyng
I am no worse gadelyng ne no worse wight
But born of a lady and geten of a knight 108
Ne durste he not to Gamelyn neer a foote go
But clepede to him his men and seyde to hem ¦o
Goþ and beteþ þis body and reueþ him his wit/
And lat him lere anoþer tyme to answere me bet 112
Than seyde þe child yonge Gamelyn [leaf 64 *a*]
Cristes curs mot þou haue broþer art/ þou myn
And if I schal algate be beten anon
Cristes curs mote þou haue but þou be þat oon 116
And anon his broþer in þe grete hete
Made his men to fette staues Gamelyn to beete
Whan þat euerych of hem hadde a staf I-nomen
Gamelyn was war þo he seigh hem comen 120
Tho Gamelyn seigh hem comen he loked ouer all
And was war of a pestel stood vnder a wall
Gamelyn was light and þider gan he lepe
And drof alle his broþeres men right soone on an heepe
he loked as a leon a layde on good won 125
Tho his broþer seigh þat he bigan to gon
he fleigh vp in til a loft and schette þe dore fast
Thus Gamelyn wiþ his pestelle made hem agast 128

Sommme for gamelynes loue and some for his eye
Att þei drowen by halues þo he bigan to pleye
What now seyde Gamelyn yuel mot þou þee
Wil ye bigynne contek and so soone flee 132
Gamelyn sought his broþer whider he was flowe
And saugh wher he loked out at a wyndowe
Broþer saide Gamelyn come a litel neer
And I wil teche þe a play atte Bokeleer 136
his broþ*er* him answerde and sayde be seint Richere
Whil þe pestel is in þin hond I wol come no neer
Broþer I wel make þy pees I swere by cristes oore/
Cast a-way þe pestel and wraþþe þe nomore 140
I moot neede sayde Gamelyn wraþþe me at oones
ffor þou wolde make þi men to breke my boones
Ne hadde I had mayn and might in myn armes
To haue hem driuen fro me þei wolde haue do me harmes
Gamelyn sayd his broþer be þou nought wroþ 145
ffor to see þe haue harm were me right loþ
I dide it nought broþer but for a fondyng
ffor for to loken or þou were strong *and* art so ȝing 148
Com a doun þan to me and g*ra*unte me my boone [leaf 64 *a*, back]
Of þing I wol þe asken and we schul saughte soone
Doun þan cam his broþer þat fikel was and felle
And was swithe sore agast of þe pestelle 152
he seyde broþer Gamelyn aske me þy boone
And loke þou me blame but I it g*ra*unte soone
Thanne seyde Gamelyn broþer y-wys
And we schulle ben at on þou most me g*ra*unte þis 156
Al þat my fader me biquath whil he was on lyue
Thou most do me it haue if we schulle nouȝt stryue
That schalt þou haue Gamelyn I swere by cristes oore
Al þat þi fader þe byquath þough þou woldest haue more
Thi lond þat lieth laye wel it schal be sowe 161
And þine houses reised vp þat ben y-leyd so lowe
Thus sayde þe knight to Gamelyn by mouþe
And þoughte of falsnesse as he wel couþe 164

The knight þought on tresoñ and Gamelyn on noon
And went and kissed his broþer and when þey weren at oon
Allas yonge Gamelyn noþing he ne wist
Wiþ such fals tresoun his broþer him kist/ 168
liþeneth and lestenep and holdep youre tonge
And ȝe schul heere talkyng of gamelyn þe ȝonge
Ther was þer besyden cried a wrastelyng
And þer fore þer was vp y-set a Ram and a ryng 172
And Gamelyn was in wille to wende þerto
ffor to preuen his might what he couþe doo
Broþer seyde Gamelyn by seint Richer
Thou most lene me to night a litel courser 176
That is freissch to þe spores on for to ryde
I moste on an Erande a litel here besyde/
By god seyde his broþer of steedes in my stalle
Go and chese þe þe beste spare non of alle 180
Of steedes or of coursers þat stonden hi*m* bysyde
And telle me goode broþer whider þou wolt ryde
here besyde broþer is cryed a wrastlyng
And þerfore schal be sette a Ram and a Ryng 184
Moche worschipe it were bro*þer* to vs alle [1 af 64 b]
Might I þe Ram and þe ryng bryngen hom to þis halle
A steede þer was sadeled smartly and skeet
Gamelyn dide a paire spores fast on his feet 188
he sette his foot in þe styrop þe steede he bistrood
And toward þe wrastelyng þe ȝonche child rood
Tho Gamelyn þe ȝonge was ryden out atte gate
The false knight his bro*þer* loked it after þate 192
And bisoughte ih*es*u crist þat is heuen king
he mighte breke his necke in þat wrastlyng
As sone as gamelyn com ther þe place was
he lighte doun of his steede and stood on þe gras 196
And þer*e* he herde a ffrankelyn wayloway syng
And bigan bitterly his hondes for to wryng
Goode man seide Gamelyn whi makest þou þis far*e*
Is þer noman þat may ȝou helpen out of þis care 200

Allas seide þis ffrankleyn þat euer was I bore
ffor tweye stalworþe sones I wene þat I haue lore
A championñ is in þe place þat haþ y-wrought me sorwe
ffor he haþ slayn my tuo sones but if god hem borwe 204
I wolde ȝiue ten pound by ih*e*su crist and more
Wiþ þe nones I fand a man to handelen him sore
Goode man seide Gamelyn wilt þou wel done
hold myn hors whil my man draweþ of my schone 208
And help my man to kepe my cloþes and my steede
And I wil in to þe place gon to loke if I may speede
By god seide þe ffrankeleyn it schal be doon
I wol my self be þy man to drawen of þi schoon 212
And wende þou in to þe place ih*e*su crist þe speede
And drede not of þi cloþes nor of þi goode steede
Barfot and vngert Gamelyn in came
Alle þat were in þe place heede of him þei name 216
how he dorste auntre him of him to don his mighť
That was so doughty a champio*u*n in wrastelyng and in fighť
vp sterte þe Champio*u*n rapely anon
Toward ȝonge Gamelyn he bigan to goon 220
And seide who is þi fader and who is þi sire/ [leaf 64 *b*, back]
ffor soþe þou art a gret fool þat þou come hire/
Gamelyn answerde þe Champio*u*n þo/
Thou knewe wel my fader whil he couþe goo 224
Whiles he was on lyue by seint Martyn
Sire Iohñ of Boundes was his name and I Gamelyn
ffelawe seide þe Champio*u*n so mote I þriue
I knew wel þi fader whil he was on lyue 228
And þi self Gamelyn I wol þat þou it heere
Whil þou were a ȝong boy a moche schrewe þou were/
Than seide Gamelyn and swor by cristes oore
Now I am oldere woxe þou schalt fynde me a more 232
By god sayde þe championñ welcome mote þou be/
Come þou ones in myn hond schalt þou neuer þe
It was wel wiþinne þe nighť and þe moone schon
Whan Gamelyn and þe Championñ togidere gonne gon 236

The champio*un* caste tornes to Gamelyn þat was preste
And Gamelyn stood stille and bad him don his beste
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe champio*un*
Thou art faste aboute to bringe me doun 240
Now I haue proued many tornes of þine
Thou most he seyde prouen on or tuo of myne
Gamelyn to þe champiōñ yede smertly anoon
Of alle þe turnes þat he couþe he schewed him but oon
And kast hi*m* on þe left syde þat þe ribbes to-brak 245
And þarto his oon arm þat yaf a gret crak
þ*a*n seyde Gamelyn smertly anoon
Schal it be holde for a cast or elles for noon 248
By god seyde þe champio*un* wheþer þat it be
he comeþ oones in þin hond schal he neuer þe
Than seyde þe ffrankelein þat hadde his sone þere/
Blessed be þou Gamelyn þat euer þou bore were 252
The ffrankeleyn seide to þe champiōñ of him stod him non eye
This is ȝonge Gamelyn þat taughte þe þis pleye
Aȝein answerde þe Champio*un* þat liked noþing welle
he is oure alþer maister and his pley is right felle/ 256
Siþen I wrastlede first it is y-go ful yore [Ed. f 65]
But I was neu*er*e my lyf handled so sore
Gamelyn stood in þe place alone wiþoute sirk
And sayde if þer be moo lat he*m* come to werke 260
The champioñ þat payned hi*m* to werke so sore
It semeth by his continance þat he wol no more
Gamelyn in þe place stood stille as a stoon
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 264
Ther was non with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more
ffor he handled þe Champiōñ so wonderliche sore/
Tuo gentil men yemede þe place
Come to Gamelyn) god ȝiue him goode g*ra*ce 268
And sayden to him do on þin hosen and þi schoon
ffor soþe at þis tyme þis faire is y-done
And þanne sayde Gamelyn so moot I wel fare
I haue nought ȝit haluendel sold my ware/ 272

Tho sayde þe Champiōñ so brouke I my sweere
He is a fool þat þ*er*-of' byeþ þou sellest it so deere
Tho saide þe ffrankeleyn that was in moche care/
ffelawe he sayde whi lakkest' þou his ware/ 276
By seint' Iame in Galeys þat' many man haþ sought'
yit' it' is to good chepe þat' þou hast' y-bought'
Tho þat' wardeynes were of' þat' wrastlyng'
Come and broughte Gamelyn þe Ram & þe ryng' 280
And sayde haue gamelyn þe Ring' and þe Ram
ffor þe beste wrastelere þat' euer heere cam
¶ Thus wan Gamely þe Ram and þe Ryng'
And wente with moche Ioye hom in þe mornyng' 284
his bro*þer* seigh wher he cam wiþ þe grete route
And bad schitte þe gate and holde him wiþoute
þe porter of' his lord was sore agast'
And stert' anon to þe gate and lokked it fast' 288
Now liþeþ and lesteneþ boþe ȝong' and olde/
And ȝe schul heere game of' Gamelyn þe bolde/
Gamelyn com þer for to haue come In
Than was it' schett' faste wiþ a pyn 292
Thanne seyde Gamelyn porter vndo þe gate/
ffor many a good mannes sone stondeþ þ*er*ate [leaf 65, back]
Than answerd þe porter and swor' by goddes berde
Thou ne schalt' Gamelyn come in to þis ȝerde 296
Thou lixt' sayde Gamelyn so brouke I my chyn
he smot' þe wiket' with his foot' and brak' away þe pyn
The porter seih þo it mighte no bettre be
he sette foot' on erþe he bigan to flee 300
By my faiþ sayde Gamelyn' þat' trauaile is lore
ffor I am of' foote as light' as þou þough þou haddest swore
Gamelyn ouertok' þe porter and his teene wrak'
And gert' him in þe necke þat' þe boon tobrak' 304
And took' him by þat' oon arm and þrew him in a welle/
vij. fadmen it' was deep as I haue herd telle/
Whan Gamelyn þe yonge þus hadde playd his play
Alle þat' in yerde weren drewen hem a-way 308

þei dredden him ful sore for wreke þat he wrought
And for þe faire companye þat he þider brought
Gamelyn ȝede to þe gate and leet [it] vp wyde
he leet hem in alle þat gone wolde or ryde 312
And seyde ȝe be welcome wiþouten eny greeue
ffor we wiln ben maisteres heere and aske no man leeue
yesterday I lefte seyde ȝonge Gamelyn
In my broþer seler .v. tonne of wyn 316
I wol not þis companye parten a twynne
And ye wol doon after me whil ony sope is þrinne
And if my broþer grueche or make foul cheere
Oþer for spense of mete *and* drink þat we spenden heere/
I am oure catour and bere oure alþer purce
he schal haue for his gruecching seint maries curse
My broþer is a negoñ I swere by cristes oore
And we wol spende largely þat he haþ spared yore 324
And who þat makeþ gruecching þat we heere dwelle/
he schal to þe porter in to þe drawe welle/
vij. dayes and seue night Gamelyn heeld his feeste/
With mochel solace was þere and no cheste/ 328
In a litel toret his broþer lay steke
And seigh hem wasten his good but durst he not speke [leaf 66]
Erly on a mornyng on þe viij^e^. day
The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here way 332
lordes sayde Gamelyn wil ye so hye
All þe wyn is not yet drunken so brouk I my*n* ye
Gamelyn in his herte was wel woo
Wha*n*ne his gestes toke hir*e* leue from him for to goo 336
he wolde þei hadde dwelled lenger *and* þai saide nay
But bitaughten Gamelyn god and good day
Thus maade Gamelyn his feeste and brought it wel to eende
And after his gestes tok leue to wende 340
litheþ and lestene þ and holdeþ ȝoure tonge
And ȝe schul heere gamen of Gamelyn þe ȝonge
herkeneth lordynges and listeneth aright
Whan all gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight 344

Aſt þe whil þat Gamelyn held his mangerie
his broþer þought on him be wreke with his treccherie
Tho Gamelynes gestes were riden and y-gon
Gamelyn stood anoon allone frend had he noon 348
Tho after ful soone wiþinne a litel stounde
Gamelyn was taken and ful harde bounde
fforþ com þe false knight out of þe sellere
To Gamelyn his broþer he ȝede ful neere 352
And seyde to Gamelyn who made þe so bold
ffor to stroyen my stoore of myn houshold
Broþer sayde Gamelyn wraþþe þe right nouȝt
ffor it is many day go siþþen it was bought 356
ffor broþer þou hast had by seint Richer
Of fiftene plowes of lond þis xvj. ȝer
And of alle þe beestes þou hast forþ bred
That my fader me byquath on his deth bed 360
Of alle þis .xvj. ȝeer I yiue þe þe prow/
ffor þe mete and þe drink þat we haue spended now
Thanne seyde þe false knight yuel mote he þee
herkne broþer Gamelyn what I wol yiue þee/ 364
ffor of my body broþer geten heer haue I noon
I wil make þe my*n* heir I swere by sein Iohn [leaf 66, back]
P*ar* ma fay seyde Gamelyn and it so bee
And þou þenke as seist god ȝelde it þe 368
No þing wiste Gamelyn of his broþ*er*es gile
Ther-fore he him begiled in a litel while/
Gamelyn seyde he o þi*n*g I þe telle
Tho þou þrewe my porter in to þe drawe welle 372
I swoor in þat wraþþe and in þat grete moot
þat þou scholdest be bounde boþe hand and foot
Therfore I þe beseche broþ*er* Gamelyn
Lat me nought be forsworne broþ*er* artow myn 376
Lat me bynde þe boþe hand and foote
ffor to halde myn avow as I þe bihoote
Broþ*er* seyde Gamelyn as so mote I þee
Thou schalt nought be forsworne for þe loue of me 380

Tho maden þei gamelyn to sitte mightꝰ he notꝰ stonde
Til þei hadden him bounde/ boþe footꝰ and honde
The false knightꝰ his broþer ofꝰ Gamelyn was agastꝰ
And sente after feteres to feteren him atte last 384
his broþer made lesynges on him þer he stood
And tolde hem þat comen In thatꝰ Gamelyn was wood
Gamelyn stood to a post bounden in þe halle/
Tho thatꝰ comen in lokeden on him alle 388
Euer stood Gamelyn euen vprightꝰ
But mete and drinkꝰ hadde he noon noþer day ne nightꝰ
Thanne sayde Gamelyn broþ*er* by my*n* hals
Now I haue aspied þou artꝰ a party fals 392
hadde I wistꝰ þatꝰ tresoñ þatꝰ þou haddest y-founde
I wolde haue youe strokes or I hadde be bounde
Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny stoon
Tuo daies and tuo nightes mete hadde he noon 396
Thanne sayde Gamelyn þat stood y-bounde stronge
Adam spenser me þinkꝰ I faste to longe
Ad*a*m þe spenser now I beseche þe
ffor þe moche loue my fader loued þe 400
Ifꝰ þou may come to þe kayes leese me outꝰ ofꝰ bonde
And I schal parte wiþ þe of my free londe [leaf 67]
Thanne sayde ad*a*m þatꝰ was þe spenser
I haue s*er*ued þi broþ*er* þis .xvj. ȝer 404
Ifꝰ I lete þe gon outꝰ ofꝰ his boure
he wolde say afterward I were a traitour
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn so brouke I myn hals
þou schaltꝰ fynde my broþ*er* atte laste right fals/ 408
Ther-fore broþ*er* ad*a*m loose me out ofꝰ bondes
And I wil parte with þe ofꝰ my free londes
vp swich a forward seide ad*a*m y-wys/
I wol do þ*er*to al þatꝰ in me is 412
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn also mote I þee
I wil holde þe couenañt and þou wil lose me
Anon as adames lord to bedde was y-goon
Ad*a*m tokꝰ þe kayes and leetꝰ Gamelyn out a-non 416

He vnlokked Gamelyn boþe handes *and* feet
In hope of auañcem*e*nt þat he him biheet •
Thanne seide Gamelyn þanked be goddes sonde
Now I am loosed boþe foot and honde 420
hadde I now eten and drunken aright
Ther is non in þis hous schulde bynde me þis night
Ad*a*m took Gamelyn stille as stille as eny stoon
And ladde him in to spense rapely and anoon 424
And sette him to soper right in a priue stede
he bad him do gladly and Gamelyn so dede
Anon as Gamelyn hadde eten wel and fyn
And þerto y-dronke wel of þe reede wyn 428
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn what is now þy rede
ffor I go to my broþer and gyrde of his hede
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m it schal nouȝt be so
I can teche þe a reede þat is worth þe tuo 432
I wot wel for soþe þat þis is no nay
We schulle haue a mangery right on sonday
Abbotes and P*ri*ours many heer schal be
And oþer men of holy chirche as I telle þe 436
þou schalt stonde vp by þe poste as þou were hond fast
And I schal leue þam vnloke þat away þou may hem caste
Whan þat þei haue eten and wasshen here hondes [lf 67, bk]
Thou schalt biseke hem all*e* to bringe þe out of bondes 440
And if þei wil borwe þe þat were good game
Thanne were þou out of p*ri*soñ and I out of blame
And if ech of hem sey to vs nay
I schal don anoþ*er* I swere by þis day 444
Thou schalt haue a good staff/ and I wol haue anoþ*er*
And cristes curs haue þat oon þat failleþ þat oþ*er*
Ya for gode seyde Gamelyn I say it for me
If I faile on my syde yuele mote I þe 448
If we schulle algate assoile hem of here synne
Warne me broþer ad*a*m whan we schul begynne
Gamelyn seyde ad*a*m by seinte charite/
I wil warne þe biforn whan þat it schal be 452

Whan I twynk' on þe loke for to gone
And cast' awey þe fetteres and come to me anoon
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn blessed be þy boones
That' is a good counsail yeuyng' for þe nones 456
If' þey werne me to bringe me out' of' beendes
I wol sette goode strokes right' on here lendes
Tho þe sonday was y-come and folk' to þe feeste
ffaire þei were welcomed boþe leste and meeste 460
And euere as þey atte hall dore comen In
Thay caste þair yhe on ȝonge Gamelyn
The false knight' his broþ*er* and ful of' trecchery
Alle þe gestes þat' þer were atte mangery 464
Of' Gamelyn his broþer he tolde hem with mouþe/
All þe harme and þe schame þat' he telle couþe
Tho þei were serued of' messes tuo or þre
Thanne seyde Gamelyn how serue ȝe me/ 468
It' is not' wel s*er*ued by god þat' al made
That' I sitte fastyng' and oþer men make h*em* glade
The fals knight' his broþ*er* þere þat' he stood
Tolde all his gestes þat Gamelyn was wood 472
And Gamelyn stood stille and answerde nought
But' adames wordes he heeld in his þought' [leaf 68]
Tho Gamelyn gan speke dolfully wiþ all*e*
To þe grete lordes þat' saten in þe hall*e* 476
lordes he seyde for cristes passioñ
help to brynge Gamelyn out of' p*ri*soñ
Thanne seyde an abbot' sorwe on his cheeke
he schal haue cristes curs and seinte maries eeke 480
That' þe out' of' p*ri*soun beggeth or borweth
But' euere worþe hem wel þat' doþ þe moche sorwe
After þat' abbot' þan spak' anoþer
I wolde þin hed were offe þey þou were my broþ*er* 484
All*e* þat' þe borwe foule moot' þam falle
Thus þei seide all*e* þat' weren in þe hall*e*
Than seyde a p*ri*our yuel mote he þriue
It' is moche sorwe & and skaþe boy þat' þou art on lyue 488

Ow seyde Gamelyn so brouke I my bon
Now I haue aspied þat' freendes haue I noon
Cursed mot' he worthe boþe fleisshe and blood
That euere do priour or abbot' eny good 492
Adam þe spenser took' vp þe cloþe
And loked on Gamelyn and seih þat' he was wrooth
Adam on þe Pantrie litul he þought'
But' tuo goode staues to halle dore he brought' 496
Adam looked on Gamelyn and he was war anon
And cast' awey þe feteres and he bygan to goon
Tho he cam to adam he took' þat' oo staf'
And bigan to worche and goode strokes yaf' 500
Gamleyn cam in to þe halle and þe spencer bothe
And loked hem aboute as þei hadde be wroþe
Gamelyn sprengeþ holy water with an ook spire
That' somme þat' stoode vpright' felle in the fire 504
Ther was no lewed man þat' in þe halle stood
That' wolde do Gamelyn any þing' but' good
But' stooden besyden and lete hem boþe werche
ffor þei hadde no reuþe of' men of' men of' holy cherche 508
Abbot' or priour monk' or chanoñ
That' Gamelyn ouertok' anon þei ȝeden doun [leaf 68, back]
Ther was non of' hem alle þat' wiþ his staf' mette
That' he made hem ouerþrowe and quitte hem his dette 512
Gamelyn sayde adam for sainte charite/
Pay good lyueray for þe loue of' me
And I wol kepe þe dore so euer heere I masse/
Er þei ben assoiled þer schal non passe 516
Dout' þe nouȝt' seide Gamelyn whil we ben in feere/
Kepe þou wel þe dore and I wol werche heere
Stere good adam and late þer none flee
And we schulle telle largely how many þer be 520
Gamelyn seyde adam do hem but' good
Thay ben men of' holy che[rche] draw of' hem no blood
Saue wel þe croune and do hem non harmes
But' breke boþe here legges and siþþen here armes 524

Thus Gamelyn and ad*a*m wroughte right' faste/
And pleyden with þe monkes and made hem agaste/
Thider þey come rydyng' Iolyly wiþ swaynes
And hom a3ein þei were ledde in Cartes *and* *in* waynes 528
Tho þei hadden all*e* y-don þan seyde a gray frere
Allas sire abbot' what' dide we now heere
Tho þat' we comen hider it was a cold rede
vs hadde ben better at' home wiþ water and wiþ breed 532
Whil Gamelyn made ordres of' monkes and freere/
Euer stood his broþer and made foul cheere
Gamelyn vp wiþ his staf' þat' he wel knew
And gerte him in þe nekke þat' he ouerþrew 536
A litel aboue þe girdel þe riggebon tobarst'
And sette him in þe feteres þer he sat' arst'
Sitte þere broþer seyde Gamelyn
ffor to coole þi blood as I dide myn 540
As swiþe as þei hadde wroken hem on here foon)
They askede water and wisshen anoon)
What' so*m*me for here loue and so*m*me for awe
Alle þe s*er*uantz serued hem of' þe beste lawe 544
The scherreue was þenne but fyue myle/
And al was told him in a litel while/ [leaf 69]
how Gamelyn and ad*a*m hadde don a sory res
Bounden and wounded men a3ein þe kinges pees 548
Tho bigan sone strif' for to wake
And þe scherref' aboute Gamelyn for to take
Now lithe þ and lestene þ so god 3iue 3ou good fyn
And 3e schul heere good game of' 3onge Gamelyn) 552
ffour and twenty 3onge me*n* þat' helden ful bolde
Come to þe scherref' and seyde þat' þai wolde
Gamelyn and ad*a*m fette be way
The scherref' yaf' hem leue soþ as I 3ou say 556
þei hieden faste wolde þay nought' belynne
Til þei comen to þe gate þer gamelyn was Inne
They knokken on þe gate þe porter was ney
And loked out' at' an hole as man þat was sleigh 560

The porter hadde beholde þam a litel while
he louede Gamelyn and was adrad of gile/
And leet þe wiket stonde ful stille
And asked hem wiþoute what was here wille 564
ffor all þe grete company þanne spak but oon
Vndo þe gate porter and lat vs In goon
Than seyde þe porter so brouke I my chynne
ȝe schul sey ȝour erand er ȝe comen Inne 568
Sey to Gamelyn and ad*a*m if þeir wille be
We wol speke to hem two wordes or þre
ffelaw sayde þe porter stond þere stille
And I wol wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille 572
In wente þe porter to Gamelyn anon
And saide sire I warne ȝou here ben come ȝoure foon
The scherreues men ben atte gate
ffor to take ȝou boþe schulle ȝe not scape 576
Porter seyde Gamelyn so mote I wel þe
I wol allowe þe þi wordes whan I my tyme see
Go aȝein to þe gate and dwelle wiþ hem a while/
And þou schalt see right soone porter a gyle 580
Ad*a*m seyde Gamelyn loke þe to goone
We haue foomen atte gate and freendes neuer oone [leaf 69, back]
It ben þe scherreues men þat hider ben y-come/
Thei ben swore to-gidere þat we schul be nome 584
Gamelyn saide ad*a*m hye þe right blyue
And if I faile þe þis day yuel mote I þriue
And we schulle so welcome þe Scherreues men
That so*m*me of he*m* schulle make here beddes in þe fen 588
Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out wente
And a good cart staf in his hond he hente
Ad*a*m hente soone anoþer gret staf
ffor to helpe Gamelyn and goode strokes he ȝaf 592
Ad*a*m felde tweyne and Gamelyn felde þre
That oþer sette feet on erþe and bigan to flee
What seide ad*a*m so euere heere I masse/
I haue right good wyn / drynke or ȝe passe 596

Nay by god sayde þai þi drink' is not' good
It' wolde make a mannes brayn to lyen in his hood
Gamelyn stood stille and loked him aboute
And saide þe scherref' comeþ with a gret' route 600
Ad*a*m seide Gamelyn what' be now þy redes
here comeþ þe scherreue and wil haue oure heedes
Ad*a*m sayde to Gamelyn my reed is now þis
Abyde we no longere if' we fare amys 604
I rede þat' we to woode goon ar þat' we be founde
Bettre is it' þer louse þan in toune y-bounde
Ad*a*m tok' by þe hond ȝonge Gamelyn
And eu*er*y of' hem drank' a draught' of' wyn 608
And after token here cours and wenten here way
Tho fond þe scherreue nest' and noon ay
The scherref' lighte doun and went' in to þe halle
And fond þe lord fetered faste wiþ all*e* 612
þe scherreue vnfetered him right' soone anon
And sente after a leche to hele his regge bon
lete we now þis false knight' lye in his care
And talke we of' Gamelyn and loke how he fare 616
Gamelyn in to þe woode stalkede stille
And ad*a*m þe spenser likede right' ylle [leaf 70]
Ad*a*m swore to Gamelyn by seint' richeer
Now I see it is mery to ben a spe*n*ser 620
That' leuere me were keyes to bere
Than walken in þis wilde woode my cloþes to tere
Ad*a*m sayde Gamelyn dismaye þe right' nought'
Many good mannes childe in care is brought' 624
As þei tooke talking' boþe in feere
Ad*a*m herde talking' of men and neigh him þought' þei were
Tho Gamelyn vnder woode loked aright'
vij. score of' ȝonge men he say wel adight' 628
All*e* satte atte mete compas aboute
Ad*a*m sayde Gamelyn now haue ȝe no doute
After bale comes boote þorugh goddes might'
Me þinkeþ of' mete and drynk' þat' I haue a sight' 632

Ad*a*m lokede þo vnder woode bowgh
And þo he say mete he was glad ynough
ffor he hopede to god for to haue his deele
And he was sore alonged after a good meele 636
As he saide þat' word þe mayster outlawe
Saugh Gamelyn and ad*a*m vnder woode schawe/
ȝonge men seyde þe maistir by þe god roode
I am war of' gestes god sende vs goode 640
ȝond been tuo yonge men right' wel adight'
And p*er*auenture þer ben mo who so loked aright'
Ariseþ vp yonge men and sette hem to me
It' is good þat' we witen what' men it' be 644
vp þei sterten .vij. fro þe dyner
And metten with Gamelyn and ad*a*m spenser
Whan þei were neih hem þan seyde þat' oon
yeldeþ vp yonge men ȝour bowes & your floon 648
Thanne seide Gamelyn þat' yong' was of' elde
Moche sorwe mote he haue þat' to yow hem ȝeelde
I corse non oþer but' right' my selue
þey ȝe fette to yow fyue þanne ye be twelue 652
þo þei herde by his word þat' might' was in his arm
There was non of' hem þat' wolde don him harm [leaf 70, back]
But' seide to gamelyn myldely and stille/
Com afore oure maister and say to him þi wille 656
yonge men seyde Gamelyn by your leute/
What' man is ȝour maister þat' ye with be
Alle þei answerde wiþoute lesyng'
Oure mayster is crouned of' outlawes king' 660
Ad*a*m sayde Gamelyn go we in cristes name/
he may neyþer mete ne drynk' werne vs for schame/
If þat' he be kynde and come of' gentil [blood]
he wol yeue vs mete & drynk' and don vs som good 664
By saint' Iame saide ad*a*m what' harm þat' I gete/
I wol auenture me to þe dore þat' I hadde mete/
Gamelyn and ad*a*m wente forþ in feere
And þei grette þe maister þat' þey founde þere 668

Than seyde þe mayster king of outlawes
What seeke ȝe yonge men vnder þe woode schawes/
Gamelyn answerde þe king wiþ his croune
he moste needes walke in woode þat may not walke in towne
Sire we walke not heere non harm to do 673
But if we meete a deer to schete þer to
As men þat ben hungry and mowe no mete fynde
And ben harde bestad vnder woode lynde 676
Of Gamelynes wordes þe mayster hadde rewþe
And seyde ye schal haue ynough haue god my treuþe
he bad hem sitte doun for to take reste
And bad hem ete and drynke and þat of þe beste 680
As þei eeten and dronke wel and fyn
Than saide þat oon to þat oþer þis is Gamelyn
Tho was þe maister out-lawe in to counseil nome
And tolde how it / was Gamelyn þat þider was y-come 684
Anon as he herde how it was byfalle
he made him maister vnder him ouer he*m* alle
Wiþinne þe þridde weke him come tydynges
To þe mayster outlawe þat was here kyng*es* 688
þat he schulde come home his pees was maad
And of þat goode tydyng he was ful glaad [leaf 71]
Tho sayde he to his ȝonge men soþ for to telle
Me ben comen tydynges I may no leng*er* dwelle 692
Tho was Gamelyn anon wiþoute taryyng
Maad mayster outlawe and crouned here king
Tho was Gamelyn crouned king of out-lawes
And walked a while vnder woode schawes 696
The false knight his broþer was scherreue and sire
And leet his broþer endite for hate and for Ire
Tho were his bonde men sory and noþing gladde
Whan Gamelyn here lord wolfes heed was cried and maad
And sente out of his men wher þey might him fynde 701
ffor to seeke Gamelyn vnder þe woode lynde
To tellen him tydyng*es* the wynd was went
And all his good reued and his men schent 704

Whan þei had him founden on knees þey hem setten)
And a-doun with here hood and here lord gretten)
Sire wraþþe you nought' for þe goode roode
ffor we haue brought' ȝou tydynges but' þei ben not' goode
Now is þy broþer scherreue and haþ þe baillie 709
And haþ endited þe and wolfes heed doþ þe crye
Allas sayde Gamelyn þat' euer I was so slak'
That' I ne hadde broke his necke þo I his rigge brak' 712
Goþ greeteþ wel my*n* housbondes and wijf
I wil ben atte nexte schire haue god my lijf'
Gamelyn cam wel redy to þe nexte schire
And þere was his broþer boþe lord and sire 716
Gamelyn com boldely in to þe moot' hall*e*
And putte adoun his hood among' þe lordes all*e*
God saue yow lordynges þat' now heere be
But' broke bak' Scherreue yuel mote þou þee 720
Why hast' þou do me þat' schame and vilenye
ffor to late endite me and wolues heed do me crye
Tho þoughte þe false knight' for to ben awreke
And leet' take Gamelyn most' he nomore speke 724
Might' þer be no more grace but' Gamelyn atte laste/
Was cast' in to p*ri*soñ and fetered faste/ [leaf 71, back]
¶ Gamelyn haþ a broþer þat' highte sire Oote
As good a knight' and heende as mighte gon on foote 728
Anon ȝeede a messager to þat' goode knigh̄t'
And told hi*m* altogider how Gamelyn was digh̄t
Anon as sire Oote herde how Gamelyn was digh̄t'
he was right sory was he noþing' ligh̄t' 732
And leet' sadle a steede and þe way he nam
And to his tweyne breþeren right' soone he cam
Sire sayde sire Ote to þe Scherreue þo
We ben but' þre bre*þe*ren schulle we neuer be mo 736
And þou hast' p*ri*soned þe beste of' vs all*e*
Swich anoþer broþer' yuel him mote bifall*e*
Sire Ote seyde þe fals knight' lat' be þi curs
By god for þi wordes he schal fare þe wurs 740

To þe kinges prisone he is y-nome
And þer he schal abyde to þe Iustice come
Parde saide sire Ote bettre it schal be
I bidde him to maymp*ris* þat þou g*r*aunte to me 744
Til þe nexte sittyng of deliuerance
And late þanne Gamelyn stande to his chaunce
Broþer in swich a forward I take him to þe
And by þi fader soule þat þe bigat and me 748
But he be redy whan þe Iustice sitte
Thou schalt bere his Iuggement for all þi grete witte
I g*r*aunte wel seide sire Ote þat it so be
let deliuere him anon and tak him to me 752
Tho was Gamelyn deliuered to sire Ote his broþ*er*
And þat night dwelleden þat oon wiþ þat oþer
On þe morwe seyde Gamelyn to sire Ote þe heende
Broþer he seyde I moot for soþe fro þe weende 756
To loke how my yonge men leden here lyf
Wheþer þey lyuen in Ioye or elles in strif
By god seyde sire Ote þat is a cold rede
Now I se þat all þe cark schal fall*e* on myn hede 760
ffor whan þe Iustice sitte and þou be nought y-founde
I schal anon be take and in þy stede y-bounde [leaf 72]
Broþer sayde Gamelyn dismaie þe nought
ffor by saint Iame in Gales that many man haþ sought 764
If þat god almighty holde me my lyf and witte
I wil be þere redy whan þe Iustice sitte
Thanne seide sire Ote to Gamelyn god schilde þe fro schame
Com whan þou seest tyme and bryng vs out of blame 768
¶ litheth and lesteneth and holdeþ ȝou stille
And ȝe schulle heere how Gamelyn hadde his wille
Gamelyn wente vnder þe woode Rys
And fond þere pleying yonge men of pris 772
Tho was yonge Gamelyn right glad ynough
Whan he fond his men vnder þe woode bough
Gamelyn and his men talked in feere
And þey hadde good game here maister to heere/ 776

his men tolden him of' auentures þat' þei hadde y-founde
And Gamelyn him tolde ȝein how he was faste bounde
Whil Gamelyn was outlawe hadde he no curs
Ther was no man þat' for him ferde þe wors 780
But' abbotes and p*ri*ours monk' and Chanōn
On of' hem lefte he nought' whan he might' hem nom
Whil Gamelyn and his men made merþes Ryue
The false knight' his broþer yuel mote he þriue 784
ffor he was faste aboute boþe o day and oþ*er*
ffor to hire þe queste to hangen his broþ*er*
Gamelyn stood on a day and he biheeld
The woodes and þe schawes in þe wilde feeld 788
he þought' on his broþer how he him beheet
þat' he wolde be redy whan þe Iustice seet
he þoughte wel þat' he wolde wiþoute delay
Come afore þe Iustice to keepen his day 792
And seide to his yonge men dighte yow ȝare
ffor whan þe Iustice sitte we mote be þare
ffor I am vnder borwe til þat' I come/
And my broþer for me to prisoñ schal be nome 796
By seint' Iame seide his ȝonge men and þou rede þ*er*too
Ordeigne how it schal be and it schal be do [leaf 72, back]
Whil Gamelyn was comyng' þer þe Iustice satte
The false knight' his broþer for-yatte he not' þatte 800
To hire þe men on his quest' to hangen his broþer
Though þey hadde nought' þat oon he wolde haue þat oþer
Tho cam Gamelyn fro vnder woode Rys
And broughte with him ȝonge men of' prys 804
I se wel seyde Gamelyn the Iustice is sette
Go aforn ad*a*m and loke how it spette
Ad*a*m wente in to þe halle and loked all aboute
he seih þere stonde lordes boþe grete and stoute 808
And sire Ote his broþer fetered wel fast'
Tho went' ad*a*m out of' halle as he were agast
Ad*a*m seide to Gamelyn and to his felawes all*e*
Sire Ote stant' fetered in þe moot' hall*e* 812

yonge men sayde Gamelyn þis þey heeren alle
Sire Ote stant fetered in þe moot halle
If god yif vs grace wel for to do
he schal it abegge þat it broughte þerto 816
Thanne seyde Gamelyn þat lokkes hadde hore
Cristes curs most he haue þat him[1] bond so sore [[1] four strokes to the m.]
And þou wolt Gamelyn don after my reed
Ther is non in þe halle schal bere awey his heed 820
Adam seyde Gamelyn we wille nought doon so
We wol sle þe gultyf and late þe oþer go
I wil in to þe halle and wiþ þe Iustice speke
On hem þat ben gultyf I wol ben a-wreke 824
late non scape at þe dore yonge men take yeme
ffor I wol be Iustice þis day doomes to deeme
God speede me þis day at my newe werk
Adam com with me for þou schalt be my clerk 828
his men answerde him and bad him don his best
And if þou to vs haue neede þou schalt fynde vs preste
We wiln stande with þe whil þat we may dure
And but we werken manly pay vs non hure 832
Yonge men sayde Gamelyn so mot I wel þee/
As trusty a maister ye schal fynde of me [leaf 73]
Right þer þe Iustice sat in þe halle
In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle 836
Gamelyn leet vnfettere his broþer out of bende
Thanne seide sire Otes his broþer þat was heende
Thou haddest almost Gamelyn dwelled to longe
ffor þe queste is out on me þat I scholde honge 840
Broþer seide Gamelyn so god yif me good rest
This day þey schul ben hanged þat ben vpon þe quest
And þe Iustice boþe þat is þe Iugge man
And þe schirriue boþe þorugh him it bigan 844
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to þe Iustise
Now is þy power don þou most nedes arise
Thou hast yiuen doomes þat ben yuel dight
I wil sitten in þi sete and dressen hem aright 848

The Iustice sat' stille and roos nought' anoon)
And Gamelyn cleuede his cheke boon
Gamelyn tok' him in his armes and nomore spak'
But' þrewe him ouer þe barre and his arme tobrak' 852
Durste non to Gamelyn seye but' good
ffor fered of þe companye þat' wiþoute stood
Gamelyn sette hi*m* doun in þe Iustices sete
And sire Otes his broþer by hi*m* and ad*a*m at his feet' 856
Whan Gamelyn was sette in þe Iustices sete/
herkne of' a bourde þat' Gamelyn dede
he leet' fetere þe Iustice and his false brother
And leet' hem come to þe barre þat' oon wiþ þat' oþer 860
Tho Gamelyn hadde þus y-don hadde he no rest
Til he hadde enquered who was on þe quest
ffor to deemen his broþer sire Otes for to honge
Er he wiste which þei were he þoughte ful longe 864
But' as sone as Gamelyn wiste wher þey were
he dede hem euerichon feteren in fere
And bringen hem to þe barre and sette hem in Rewe
By my faith seide þe Iustice þe Scherreue is a schrewe/ 868
Thanne sayde Gamelyn to þe Iustice
Thou hast' youe doomes of' þe wors assise [leaf 73, back]
And þe .xij. Sisours that' weren of' þe queste
They schulle ben hanged þis day so haue I good reste 872
Thanne seyde þe Scherreue to yonge Gamelyn
lord I crye þe mercy broþ*er* art' þou myn)
Ther-fore saide Gamelyn haue þou cristes curs
ffor and þou were maister yet' I schulde haue wors 876
ffor to make schort' tale and nought' to long'
he ordeigned him a queste of' his men so strong'
The Iustice and þe Scherreue beþ honged hye
To weiuen with þe Ropes and with þe wynd drye 880
And þe .xij Sisours sorwe haue þat' rekke
All*e* þey were hanged faste by þe nekke
Thus endeth þe false knight' with his treccherie
That' euer hadde lad his lyf' in falsnes *and* folye 884

he was hanged by þe necke and nought by þe purs
That was þe meede þat he hadde for his fadres curs
Sire Otes was eldest and Gamelyn was ying
Wenten with here frendes and passed with þe king 888
They made pees with þe king of þe best assise
The king loued wel sire Ote and made him Iustice
And after þe king made Gamelyn boþe in est and west
Cheef Iustice of his fre fforest 892
Alle his wighte yonge men þe king for-yaf here gilt
And siþþen in good office þe king haþ alle hem pilt
¶ Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede
And wrak him of his enemys and quitte hem here meede 896
And sire Ote his broþer made him his heir
And siþþen wedded Gamelyn a wyf a good and a fair
They lyueden togidere whil þat crist wolde
And siþþen was gamelyn grauen vnder molde 900
And so schal we alle may þer noman flee
God bring vs to þe Ioye þat euer schal be AmeN pour charite

[*No gap in the MS.*]

[NOTICE—Inasmuch as, after the *Man of Law's Tale*, the order of the Tales in the *Corpus MS* differs from the right order of the Tales in which the *Six-Text* is to be arranged, the further issue of the separate Corpus Parts is suspended till all the Tales before the *Shipman's* in the Corpus MS have been issued in the *Six-Text*. Then the proper pagings of the separate Corpus sheets can be ascertained, and a large Part will be issued, bringing the separate issue abreast of the *Six-Text*. See the following scheme :—

Six-Text		*Corpus MS.*	
rest of Group **B**	*SHIPMAN* *Prioress* *Thopas* *Melibeus* *Monk* *Nun's Priest*	*Group* **F** 1	*Squire*
Group **C**	*Doctor* *Pardoner*	*Group* **D**	*Wife of Bath* *Friar* *Summoner*
Group **D**	*Wife of Bath* *Friar* *Summoner*	*Group* **E**	*Clerk* *Merchant*
Group **E**	*Clerk* *Merchant*	*Group* **F** 2	*Franklin*
Group **F**	*Squire* *Franklin*	*Group* **G**	*Second Nun* *Canon's Yeoman*
Group **G**	*Second Nun* *Canon's Yeoman*	*Group* **C**	*Doctor* *Pardoner*
Group **H**	*Manciple*	*rest of Group* **B**	*SHIPMAN* *Prioress* *Thopas* *Melibeus* *Monk* *Nun's Priest*
Group **I**	*Parson*	*Group* **H**	*Manciple*
		Group **I**	*Parson*]

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GROUP B. (α. FRAGMENT II.)

§ 1. MAN OF LAW'S HEAD-LINK.

CORPUS MS.

Owre oost' saugh wel þat' by þe brighte sonne .C^m.v^m.
The ark' of' his artificial day hadde ronne
The ferþe part' of' half' an hour and moore
And þough he were nought' deepe expert' in lore [leaf 74]
he wist' it was þe xviij.^e day
Of' Aprill*e* þat' is messager to May
And saugh wel þat' þe schadwe of' eu*er*y tree
Was as in lengþe þe same quantite 8
That' was þe body erect þat' caused it'
And þerfore by þe schadewe he took' his wit'
That' Phebus which þat' schon so cler and bright'
Degrees was xlv clombe on hight' 12
And for þat' day as in þat' latitude
It' was ten atte clokke he gan conclude
And sodeinly he plight' his hors aboute
lordynges q*uo*d he I warne ȝou all*e* þis route 16
The ferþe party of' þis day is gon
Now for þe loue of' god and of' seint' Iohn
leseþ no tyme as ferforth as ye may
Lordinges þe time it' wasteþ night' and day 20
And steleþ from vs what priuely slepyng'
And what' þurgh necligence in oure waking'
As doth þe streem þat' turneþ neuer agayn
Descendyng' from þe mountayn in to playn 24
Wel can senek' and many a Philosophre
Biweilen tyme more þan gold in cophre
ffor los of' catell*e* may recouered be
But' los of' tyme schendeþ vs quod he 28

It wil noughť come agayn wiþouten drede
Namore þan wile Malkyns maydenhede
Whan sche haþ lost it / in hir wantonnesse
lat vs noughť mowlen þus in ydelnesse 32
Sire Man of lawe q*uo*d he saue ȝe blis
Tel vs a tale anon as forward is
ye be submitted þurgh your free assent
To stonde in þis cas of my Iuggement 36
Aquiteþ ȝow now of ȝoure beheste
Thanne haue ȝe doon your deuer atte leste
Oost q*uo*d he dep*ar*deux ich assente
To breke forward is noughť my*n* entente [leaf 74, back]
Biheste is dette and I wil holde fayn
Al my biheste I can no bettre sain
ffor swich lawe as a man yeueþ anoþ*er* wighť
he schulde himself vsen it by right 44
Thus wile oure text but naþeles certein
I can right now no þrifty tale sein
That Chaucer þough he can but lewedly
On metris and in rymyng craftily 48
haþ sayd hem in such englissh as he can
Of olde tyme as knoweþ many a man
And if he haue noughť seyd hem leeue broþ*er*
In o book / he haþ seyd hem in anoþer 52
ffor he haþ told of louers vp and doñ
Mo þan Ovide made mencioñ
In his Epistles þat been ful olde
What scholde I tellen hem sen þei ben tolde 56
In youþe he made of Ceys and alcione
And siþþen haþ he spoke of eu*er*ychone
Thise noble wyfes and þese louers eeke
Who so þat wile his large volom seeke 60
Cleped þe seintes legende of Cupide
Ther may he seen þe large woundes wyde
Of lucresse & of Babilan Tisbe
The swerd of Dido for þe fals Ene 64

The tree of Phillis for hire Demephon
The pleynt of Dyanyre and of Ermion
Of Adriane and of ysyphile
The barayne ysle stondyng in þe see 68
The dreynt leander for his Erro
The teeres of helyne and eek þe woo
Of Brixseyde and of þe ladomya
þe cruelte of queen medea 72
The litel children hangyng by þe hals
ffor þe Iason þat was of loue so fals
Of ypmistra Penolope Alceste
youre wifhode he comendeth wiþ þe beste [leaf 75]
But certeinly no word ne writeþ he
Of þikke wicke ensample of Canace
That loued hir owne brother synfully
Of suche cursed stories I sei fy 80
Or elles of Tyro Appoloneus
how þat þe cursed king Antiochus
Biraft his doughter of hir maydenhede
That is so horrible a tale for to rede 84
Whan he hir þrew þorugh þe pament
And þerfore he of ful auisement
Nolde neuer write in none of his sermons
Of which vnkynde abhominacioñs 88
Ne I ne wil not reherce if þat I may
But of my tale how schal I don þis day
Me were loþ be likned douteles
To muses þat men clepen pieriedes 92
Methamorphoseos wot what I mene
But naþeles I recche nought a bene
Though I come after him with hawe bake
I speke in prose and lat him Rimes make 96
And with þat word he with a sobre chere
Bigan his tale as ȝe schal after heere.

[*PROLOGUE OF THE MAN OF LAWS TALE.*]

[*There are no breaks in the MS between stanzas or Parts.*]

¶ Incipit ffabula.

O Hateful harm condicioñ of pouert
With thurst with cold with hunger he confoundeth
To asken helpe þe schameþ in þin hert
If þou now axe wiþ neede art þou so wounded 102
That verray neede vnwrappeth al þi wounde hid
Maugre þin heed þou most for Indigence
Or stele or begge or borwe þi dispence 105

Thou blamest crist and seist ful bitterly
he mys departeþ richesse temporal
Thy neyghebour þou witest synfully
And seist þou hast to litel and he haþ al 109
Par fey seistow somtyme he rekene schal
Whan þat his tail schal brennen in þe gleede
ffor he nought helpeþ needeful in here neede [leaf 75, back]

¶ Herkne what is þe menyng of þe wise
Bet is to deyen þan haue Indigence
Thi self neighebore wile þe dispise
If þou be pouer far wel þi reuerence 116
yet of þe wise man tak þis sentence
Alle þe dayes of pore men ben wikke
Be war þerfore or þou come in þat prikke 119

¶ If þou be pouere þi broþer hateþ þe
And alle þi freendes fleen fro þe allas
O Riche marchantz ful of wele be
O noble prudent folk as in þis cas 123
youre bagges ben nought filled with ambes aas
But with Sis Cynk þat renneþ for ȝour chañce
At Cristes masse merye may ȝe daunce 126

¶ ye seeken lond and see for ȝour wynnynges
As wys folk þat knowen alle thestat
Of regnes ȝe ben fadres of typinges
And tales bothen of pees and of debat 130
I were right now of tales desolat
Nere þat a marchant gon is many a yere
Me taught a tale which as ye schal heere 133

[*As there is no room in this print for the Latin notes in the margin of the MS, they are put here, with the numbers of the lines to which they refer.*]

l. 161. Europia e*st* *tercia* pa*r*s mundi. [MS, leaf 76.]

l. 198. ¶ Cept*ra* pharonei fr*atr*um discordia Thebe fla*m*ma pnetontis deucalionis aque i*n* stellis p*r*iami spe*ci*es audacia turni sens*us* vlixeu herculeus q*ue* vigor. [MS, leaf 76, back.]

l. 294. ¶ Vnde P[t]holome*us* li*bro* j°, C*apitulo* g° p*r*imi motus celi duo su*n*t quor*um* vn*us* est qui mouet totu*m* se*m*p*er* ab oriente in occidente*m* vno modo sup*er* orbes & c*etera*. It*em* al*iter* v*er*o motus est qui mouet orbe*m* stellar*um* currencium. Cont*ra* motu*m* p*r*imu*m* videl*icet* ab occidente i*n* orient*em* sup*er* alios duos polos & c*etera*. Om*n*es eni*m* concordati su*n*t q*uo*d electiones sint debiles nisi in diuitib*us*, h*ab*ent eni*m* isti lic*et* debilitentur eor*um* electiones radicem .i. natiuitates eor*um* que confortat o*mn*em planeta*m* debile*m* in itinere. h*uc*. p*hilosop*hus. [MS, leaf 78.]

l. 421. ¶ Semp*er* mundane leticie tristicia repentina succedit. Mundana *er*go felicitas multis amaritudinib*us* e*st* resp*er*sa. Ext*r*ema gaudij luctus occupat audi *er*go salubre co*n*silium in die bonor*um* ne i*m*memor sis malor*um*. [MS, leaf 79, back.]

l. 771. ¶ Quid turpius eb*r*ioso cui fetor in ore tremor i*n* corpore qui p*r*omit stulta p*r*odit occulta cui mens alienatur facies t*r*ansformat*ur* nullu*m* eni*m* latet secretu*m* vbi reg*na*t ebrietas. [MS, leaf 84, back.]

l. 925. ¶ O extrema libidinis turpitudo que non solu*m* mente*m* effeminat sed ecia*m* corpus eneruat se*m*p*er* sequntur dolor & penitencia p*ost* & c*etera*. [MS, leaf 86, back.]

l. 1126. ¶ A mane vsq*ue* ad vesp*er*a*m* mutabitur te*m*pus tene*n*t tympanu*m* & gaude*n*t ad sonu*m* organi. [MS, leaf 89, back.]

l. 1135. Q*ui*s vnq*uam* vnica*m* die*m* totam duxit in sua delectac*i*one iocu*n*dam que*m* i*n* aliq*ua* p*ar*te diei reatus consci*enci*e vel impetus ire vel motus concupiscencie inde no*n* turbauerit que*m* liuor inuidie vel ardor auaricie vel tumor sup*er*bie no*n* vexauerit vel q*uem* aliqua iactura vel offensa v*el* passio no*n* co*m*mouerit. [MS, leaf 89, back.]

[*PART I.*]

[*No break in the MS.*]

¶ In Surrye whilom dwelt a companye
Of Chapmen riche and þer-to sad and trewe
That wyde where sente here spicerie
Cloþes of gold and Satyn riche of hewe 137
here chaffare was so thrifty and so newe
That eu*er*y wight haþ deynte to chaffare
With hem and eek to sellen hem here ware 140

¶ Now fil it þat þe maistres of þat sort
han schapen hem to Rome for to wende
Were it fo chapmanhode or for disport
Non oþer message wolde þey þider sende 144
But comen hemself to Rome þis is þe ende
And in swich place as þought hem auantage
ffor here entente þei take here herbergage 147

Soiorned han þise marchantez in þat toun [leaf 76]
A certein tyme as fell*e* to hire plesance
But so fell*e* þat þe excellent renoun
Of þe Emp*er*our doughter dame Custance 151
Reported was with euery circumstance
vnto þise Surrien marchantz in swich wise
ffro day to day as I schal you deuyse/ 154

¶ This was þe co*mon*e voys of euery man
Oure emp*er*our of Rome god him see
A doughter he haþ þat syn þe world bigan
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beaute 158
Nas neuer such anoþer as is sche
I pray to god in honour hir sustene
And wolde sche were of all*e* Europe þe queene 161

¶ In hire is heigh beaute wiþoute pride [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
youþe wiþoute greenehod of folye
To alle hire werkes vertu is hire guyde
humblesse haþ slayn in hire al tyrannye 165
Sche is a merour of alle curtesye
hire herte is verray chambre of holynesse
hire hand ministre of fredam for almesse 168

¶ And al þis voys is soþ as god is trewe
But now to purpos lat vs turne again
Thise marchantz han doon fraught here schippes newe
And whan þay haue þis blisful mayde sain 172
hom to Surrey beþ þei went agayn
And don here needes as þey han don yore
And lyuen in wele I can seye yow nomore 175

Now fil it þat þis marchantz stoden in grace
Of him þat was þe Sowdon of Surrie
ffor whan þei came from eny strange place
he wolde of his benigne curtesie/ 179
Make hem good chere and besily aspie
Tythynges of sundy Remes for to leere
The wondres þat þey mighte seen or heere 182

Amonges oþer þinges specially
Thise marchantz han him told of Dame Custance [leaf 76, back]
So gret noblesse in ernest ceriously
That þis Sowdan haþ caught so gret/ plesance 186
To han hire figure in his remembrance
And alle his lust and alle his besy cure
Was for to loue hire whil his lijf may dure 189

P*ar*auenture in þilke large book
Which þat þei cleped þe heuen write was
Wiþ sterres whan þat he his birþe took
That he for loue schulde han his deþ allas 193

ffor in þe sterres clerer þan is þe glas
Is writen god wot / who so cowde it rede/
The deþ of euery man wiþouten drede 196

¶ In sterres many a wynter þer biforn
Was write þe deth of Ector Achilles [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Of Pompe Iulius or þei were born
The stryf of Thebes and of hercules/ 200
Of Sampson Turnus and of Socrates
The deth/ but mennes wittes ben so dulle
That no wight can wel rede it atte fulle 203

This Sowdoñ for his priuey counseil sente
And schortly of þis mater for to pace
he haþ to hem declared his entente
And seide hem certein but if he might haue grace 207
To haue Custance wiþinne a litel space
he nas but ded and charged hem in hye
To schapen for his lyf som remedye 210

¶ Diuerse men diuerse þinges seiden
The argumentes casten vp and doun
Many a sotil resoñ forþ þey leyden
They speken of Magique and abusioñ 214
But fynally as in conclusioñ
They can not seen in þat non auantage
Ne in non oþer weye saf mariage 217

¶ Than saugh þey þer in such difficulte
By way of resoñ for to speke al playn
By cause þat þer was such diuersite [leaf 77]
Bitwen here boþe lawes þat þei sayn 221
They trowe þat no cristne prince wolde fain
Wedde his child vnder oure lawes so sweete
That vs was taught by mahoñ oure prophete 224

¶ And he answerde raþer þan I leese
Custance I wol be cristned douteles
I mot' ben hires I may non oþer cheese
I p*ray* ȝow holdeþ ȝour argumentz in pees 228
Saueþ my lif' and beþ nought Recheles
To geten hire þat' haþ my lif' in cure
ffor in this woo I may not' longe endur*e* 231

¶ What' nedeþ gratt*er*e dilatacioñ
I seie by tretys and embassadrie/
And by þe popes mediacioñ
And all*e* þe chirche and all*e* þe chiualrie 235
That' in distructioñ of' mawmattrie
And in encres of' cristes lawe deere
They ben accorded so as ȝe schal heere/ 238

¶ how þat' þe Sowdan and his Baronage
And all*e* his lieges schold y-cristened be/
And he schal han Custance in mariage
And certein gold y not' what' q*ua*ntite 242
And herto founden sufficeant' seurte
This same accord was sworn in either syde
Now faire Custance almighty god þe gyde 245

Now wolde sommen waiten as I gesse/
That' I schulde tellen al þe p*ur*ueance
That' þe Emp*er*our of' his noblesse
hath schapen for his dought*er* dame Custance 249
Wel may men knowe þat' so gret' ordinañce
May noman tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause 252

¶ Bisschoppes ben schapen wiþ hire for to wende
lordes ladies knightes of' renou*n*
And oþer folk' ynowe þis is þe ende
And notified is þurgh out' þe touñ [leaf 77, back]

That euery wiht wiþ gret deuocioñ
Scholde preye crist þat he þis mariage
Resceyue in gree. and speede þis viage 259

¶ The day is come of hir dep*ar*tyng
I sey þe woful lady[1] fatal is come [1 *so*]
That þer may be no leng*er* tarying
But forþward þey hem dressen all*e* & some 263
Custance þat with sorw is al ou*er*come
fful pale arist and dresseþ hire to wende
ffor wel sche seeth þer is non oþer ende 266

Allas what wonder is it þough sche wepte
That schal be sent to strange nacioñ
ffro freendes þat so tendrely hire kepte
And to be bounden vnder subiectioñ 270
Of oon sche knoweth not his condicioñ
housbondes ben all*e* goode and han ben yore
That knowen wyfes I dar say ȝou namore 273

¶ ffader sche sayde þi wrecchede child Custaunce
Thy yonge doughter fostred vp so softe
And ye my mooder my souereigne plesañce
Ouer all*e* þing out taken crist a lofte 277
Custance your*e* child hir recomandeþ ofte
vnto your grace for I schal to Surrie
Ne schal I neuer seen ȝou more with ye 280

Allas vnto þe Barbarie nacioñ
I moste anon siþþen it is your wille
But crist þat starf for oure Redempcioñ
So yeue me grace his hestes to fulfille 284
I wrecche wo*m*man no fors þough I spille
Wo*m*men are born to thraldom and penance
And to ben vnder mannes gouernance 287

¶ I trowe at' Troye whan Purrus brak' þe walle
Or ylion þat' brende Thebes þat' Citee
Not' Rome for the harme thurgh hanybal
That' Romayns haþ venquissed tymes þre 291
Nas herde such tendre weepyng' for pite [leaf 78]
As in þe Chambre for hire departyng'
But' forþ sche moot' wher so sche weepe or syng' 294
[*Latin note*, p. 133.]

¶ O ferste moeuyng' cruel firmament'
Wiþ þy diuinal sweigh that' crowdest' ay
And hurlest' alle fro Est' to Occident'
That' naturelly wolde holde anoþ*er* way 298
Thy crowdyng' sett' þe heuen in such array
Atte bygynnyng' of' þis fiers viage
That' cruel mars haþ slain þis mariage 301

¶ Infortunat' ascendent' tortuous
Of' which þe lord is helples falle allas
Out' of' his angle in to þe derkest' hous
O. mars .o. ataȝir as in þis cas 305
O fieble moone vnhappy been þy paas
Thou knettest' þe þer þou nart' nought' receyued
There þou were wel fro þens now art' þou weyued 308

¶ Imprudent' Emp*er*our of' Rome allas
Was þer no Philosophre in al þi toun
Is no tyme bet' þan oþer in such caas
Of' viage is þer non electiõ 312
Namly to folk' of' heigh condiciõ
Nat' whan a roote is of' a burthe y-knowe
Allas ȝe ben to lewed or to slowe 315

¶ The schip is brought' þis woful faire mayde
Solempnely wiþ eu*er*y circumstance
Now Ih*e*su crist' be with ȝou all*e* sche sayde
Ther nys nomore but' far wel faire Custance 319

Sche peynep hire to make good contynance
And forp I lete hire saile in þis manere
And torne I wille again to my matiere 322

The mooder of þe Sowdon welle of vices
Espied hap hir sones pleyne entent
how he wol lete his olde Sac*ri*fices
And right anon sche for hire counseil sent 326
And þei ben come to knowe what sche ment
And whan assembled was þis folk in feere [leaf 78, back]
Sche sette hire doun and seide as ye schal heere 329

¶ lordes quoþ sche ȝe knowen eu*er*ych on
how þat my sone in poynt is for to lete
The holy lawes of oure alkaron
yeuen by goddes messager Makomete 333
But oon avow to grete god I hete
The lyf schal rather out of my body sterte
Or makometis lawe out of myn herte 336

What scholde vs tyden of þis newe lawe
But þraldam to oure bodyes and penance
And afterward in helle to ben drawe
ffor we reneyed mahoñ oure creance 340
But lordes wol ye maken assurance
As I schal sein assentyng to my lore
And I schal make vs sauf for eu*er*emore 343

¶ They sworen and assenten eu*er*y man
To lyue with hire and dye and by hire stonde
And eu*er*ich in þe beste wise he can
To strengþen hire schal all*e* his frendes fonde 347
And sche haþ þis emprise take on honde
Which ȝe schal here þat I schal deuyse
And to hem all*e* sche spak in þis wise 350

¶ We schulle ferst feyne vs cristendom to take/
Cold water schal not greue vs but a lite
And I schal swich a reuel and feste maken
That as I trowe I schal þe soudon quite 354
ffor þough his wijf be cristened neuer so white
Sche schal haue neede to waissche a-way þe reede
Though sche a ffonte ful of water wiþ hire leede/ 357

¶ O soudanesse roote of Iniquite
Virago þou Semyram þe secounde
O. serpent vnder femeninete
lik to þe serpent deepe in helle y-bounde 361
O feyned wo*m*man al þat may confounde
Vertu and Innocence þorgh þy malice
Is bredd in þe as nest of eu*e*ry vice [leaf 79]

¶ O Sathan envious syn þilke day
That þou were chased fro oure heritage
Wel knewestow to wo*m*men þe olde way
Thow madest Eua to bringen in seruage 368
Thow wilt fordon cristene mariage
Thin Instrument so weylowey þe while
Makest þou of wo*m*men whan þou wilt begile 371

¶ This Sowdanesse whom I þus blame and warie
leet priuely hire counseil gon here way
What schulde I in þis tale lenger tarye
Sche rideth to þe Sowdan on a day 375
And seide him þat sche wolde reneye hir lay
And cristendom of prestes handes fonge
Repentynge sche heþene was so longe 378

¶ Besekyng him to doon hire þat honour
That sche most han þe cristne folk to feste
To plesen hem I wol do my labour
The Sowdan seith I wil don at your heste 382

And knelyng' þanketh hire of' þat' requeste
So glad he was he nyste what' to seye
Sche kiste hir sone and hom sche goþ hir weye 385

[*PART II.*]

¶ Arryued been þise cristene folk' to londe
In Surrie with a gret' solempne route
And hastiliche þis sowdan sent' his sonde
ffirst' to his mooder and alle þe regne aboute 389
And saide his wijf' was come out' of' doute
And preyde hir for to ryde agein þe queene
The honour of' his regne to susteene 392

¶ Gret' was þe prees and riche was þarray
Of' Surriens and Ramains met' y feere
The mooder of' þe Soudan riche and gay
Receyued hire with also glad a cheere 396
As any mooder might' hir doughter deere
And to þe nexte Citee þer bisyde
A softe paas solempnely þei ryde 399

¶ Naught' trowe I þe tryumphe of' Iulius [leaf 79, back]
Of' which þat' lukan makeþ such a bost'
Was riallere ne more curious
Than was thassemble of' þis blisful oost' 403
But' þis scorpioñ this wikkede goost'
The Sowdanesse for alle hir flateringe
Caste vnder þis ful mortally to stynge 406

¶ The Sowdan comeþ himself' sone after þis
So really that' wonder is to telle
he welcomeþ hire with alle ioye and blis
And þus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem dwelle 410

The fruyt of þis matiere þat I telle
Whan tyme come men þought it for þe best
That Reuel stynte and men gon to here Rest 413

¶ The tyme com þis olde Sowdanesse
Ordeyned haþ þis feeste of which I tolde
And to þe feste cristene folk hem dresse
In general boþe ȝonge and olde 417
here may men feste and rialte biholde
And deyntees mo þan I can ȝou deuyse
But all to deere þei bought it ar þey ryse 420

¶ O sodein woo þat euer art Successour [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
To worldly blysse spreynd is with bitte*r*nesse
The ende of þe ioye of oure worldly laboure
Wo occupieth þe fyn of oure gladnesse 424
herk þis counseill*e* for þi sikernesse
vpon þi glade day haue in thy mynde
The vnwar wo or harm þat comth behynde 427

ffor schortly for to tellen at oo word
The Sowdan and þe cristene eu*er*ychone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord
But it were oonly dame Custance allone 431
This olde Sowdanesse cursede crone
haþ with hire freendes doon þis cursede dede
ffor sche hir self wolde all*e* þe contre lede 434

¶ Ne þer nas Surrian non þat was conuerted
That of þe counseil of þe Sowdan wot [leaf 80]
That he nas al to-hewe or he asterted
And circumstance han þei take anon foot hoot 438
And in a Schipp*e* al steereles god woot
Thay han hire sette and bidden hire lerne sayle
Out of Surrie agaynward to ytaile 441

¶ A certein tresour þat sche þider ladde
And soþ to sain vitaile gret plente
They han hire yeuen and cloþes eek sche hadde
And forþ sche saileþ in þe Salte see 445
O my Custance ful of benignite
O emp*er*oures yonge doughter deere
he þat is lord ouer fortune be þy steere 448

¶ Sche blisseþ & with ful pitous vois
vnto þe croys of crist þus seyde sche
O cler o welful auter holy croys
Rede of þi lambes blood ful of pite 452
That wisshe þe world fro þe olde iniquite
Me fro þe feend and fro his clawes keepe
That day þat I schal drenchen in þe deepe 455

¶ victorious tree p*ro*teccioñ of trewe
That oonly worþi were for to bere
The king of heuene with his woundes newe
The white lambe þat hurt was with a spere 459
ffleemer of feendes out of him and here
On whych þi lymes feithfully entenden
Me keepe and yef me might my lijf tamenden 462

¶ yeeres and dayes fleet þis creature
Thurgh out þe see of grece vnto þe strayte
Of Marrok as it was hire auenture
O many a sory meel now may sche bayte 466
After hire deþ fulofte may sche wayte
Or þat þe wilde wawes wil hir dryue
vnto þe place þer sche schal arryue 469

¶ Men mighten [aske] whi sche nas nat slayn
Eke atte feste who might hir body saue
I answere to þat demande agayn [leaf 80, back]
he saued daniel in þe horrible caue 473

Ther eu*er*y wigħt saue he maister or knaue
Was wiþ þe leoñ frete or asterte
No wigħt but god þat he bar in his herte 476

¶ God list to schewe his wonderful myracle
In hire. for sche scholde seen his mighty werkes
Crist which þat is to eu*er*y harm triacle
By certein menes oft as knowen clerkes 480
Doþ þing for certein ende þat ful derk is
To mannes wit þat for oure ignorance
Ne konne nought knowe his prudent p*ur*ueance 483

¶ Now siþ sche was not atte feste y-slawe
Who kept hir fro þe drenching in þe see
Who kepte Ionas in þe fisshes mawe
Til he was spouted vp at Nyniue 487
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
That kepte pepul ebraik from here drenchyng
With drye feet þurgħ out þe see passyng 490

¶ Who bad þe foure spiritz of tempest
That power han boþe to annoyen lond and see
Boþe north and south and also west and est
Anoyeþ neyþer see ne lond ne tree 494
Soþly þe comandour of þat was he
That fro þe tempest ay þis wo*m*man kepte
As wel whan sche wook as whan sche slepte 497

¶ Wher might þis wo*m*man mete and drynke haue
Three ȝeer and moore how lasteþ hire vitaille
Who fedde þe Egipcien marie in the Caue
Or in desert no wight but crist sanz faille 501
v. þousand folk it was a gret meruaille
With loues fyue and fisshes tuo to feede
God sent his foysoñ at hire grete neede 504

¶ Sche driueþ forþ in to oure Occean
þurghout oure wilde see til atte last
vnder an hold þat nempnen I ne can
ffor in Northumburland þe wawe hir cast [leaf 81]
And in þe sond hir schipp*e* stiked so fast
That þennes wold it nought of alle a tyde
The wille of crist was þat sche scholde abyde 511

¶ The Constable of þe castell*e* doun is fare
To seen þis wrak and alle þe schipp*e* he sought
And fond þis wery wo*m*man ful of care
he fond also þe tresow þat sche brought 515
In hire langage mercy sche bisought
The lyf out of hir body for to twynne
hire to deliuer*e* of wo þat sche was Inne 518

¶ A maner latyn corupt was hire speche
But algates þer by was sche vnderstonde
The constable whan him list no leng*er*e seche
This woful wo*m*man brought he to þe londe 522
Sche kneeleth doun and þankeþ goddes sonde
But what sche was sche wolde no man seye
ffor foul ne fair þough þat sche scholde deye 525

¶ Sche seyde sche was so mased in þe see/
That sche foryat hire mynde by hire trouþe
The constable of hire haþ so gret pite
And eek his wyf þat þei weepen for rouþe 529
Sche was so diligent wiþouten slouþe
To serue and plese eu*er*ich in þat place
That alle hire louen þat loken on hire face 532

¶ The constable and dame hermengheld his wif
Were payens and þat contray eu*er*y where
But hermyngeld loued hir right as hire lijf
And Custance haþ so longe soiorned þere 536

In orisons wiþ many a bitter teere
Til Ih*e*su haþ conu*er*ted þurgh̄ his g*ra*ce
Dame hermyngeld constablesse of' þilke place 539

¶ In all*e* þat' land durste no cristene route
All*e* cristene folk' ben fled from þat' contre
Thurgh payens þat' conquereden heer aboute
The plages of' þe northh̄ by land & see 543
To wales fledde þe c*ri*stianite/ [leaf 81, back]
Of' olde britoñs dwellyng in þis Isle/
There was hire refut' / for þe meene while 546

¶ But' yit' nas neuer cristene britoñs so exiled
That' þer nas so*mm*e in here p*ri*uyte
honourede crist/ and hethen folk' bygiled
And neygh þe castell*e* swich þer dwelden þre 550
That' oon of' hem was blynd and might' not' se
But' it' were wiþ þilk' eyen of' his mynde
With whiche men seen after þat' þai ben blynde 553

¶ Bright' was þe sonne as in þat' Som*e*res day
ffor which þe Constable and his wyf' also
And Custance han y-take þe righte way
Toward þe see a forlong' weye or two 557
To pleyen and to Romen to and fro
And in here walk' þre blynde men þey mette
Crokede and olde with fast' eyen y-schette 560

¶ In the name of' crist' criede þis blynde bretoñ
dame hermyngild' yeue me sight' agayn
This lady wax affrayed of' þe soun
lyst' þat' hir housbond schortly for to sein 564
Wolde hire for ih*e*su cristes loue haue slain
Til Custance made hire bold and made hire werche
The wille of' crist' as dought*er* of' his cherch 567

¶ The Constable wax abaisshed of þat sight
And sayde what amounteþ al þis fare
Custance answerde sire it is cristes might
That helpeþ folk out of þe feendes snare 571
And so ferforth sche gan oure lay declare
That sche þe Constable or þat it was eue
Conuerteþ and on cryst made him bileeue 574

¶ This Constable was noþing lord of þis place
Of which I speke þere he Custance fond
But kepte it strongly many a wynter space
vnder .alla. kyng of all Northumberlond 578
þat was ful wys and worþy of his hond
Agayn þe Scottes as men may wel heere [leaf 82]
But torne I wil again to my mateere / 581

¶ Sathan þat euer vs wayteth to begile
Saugh of Custance al hire perfectioñ
And cast anon how he might quite her while
And made a yong knight þat dwelte in þe toun 585
loue hire so hoot of fowl affectioñ
That verraily him þought he schulde spill
But he of hire might ones haue his wille 588

¶ he woweth hire but it auaileþ nought
Sche wolde do no synne by no weye
And for dispit he compassed in his þought
To make hir on schameful deþ to deye 592
he wayteþ whan þe Constable was aweye
And priuyly vpon a night he crept
In hermyngildes chambre whil sche slept 595

¶ Wery for-waked in his orisons
Slepeth Custance and hermenghild also
This knight þurgh Sathanas temptacioñs
Al softely is to þe bedde I-go 599

And kutte þe þrote of hermengild a tuo
And leyde þe blody knyf by dame Custance
And wente his wey þer god yeue him meschance 602

¶ Sone after comth þis constable hom a gayn
And eek Alla þat king was of þat lond
And saugh his wyf dispitousliche slain
ffor which ful ofte he wepte and wrong his hond 606
And in þe bed þe bloody knyf he fond
By dame Custance allas what might sche seye
ffo verray woo hir witte was alle aweye 609

¶ To king Alla was told al þis meschance
And eek þe tyme and wher and in what wise
That in a schip was founde þis Custance
As heer biforn ȝe han herd eer deuise 613
The kinges herte of pite gan agrise
Whan he seih so benigne a creature
ffalle in disese and in mysauenture [leaf 82, back]

¶ ffor as þe lomb toward his deth is brought
So stant þis Innocent bifore þe king
This false knight þat haþ þis trayson wrought
Bereþ hire an hand þat sche haþ do þis þing 620
But naþeles þer was gret mornyng
Among þe poeple and seye þay can not gesse
That sche hadde don so gret a wickednesse 623

¶ ffor þey han sein hir euer so vertuous
And louyng hermynghild right as hire lif
Of þis bar witnesse euerich in þat hous
Sauf he þat hermegild slough wiþ his knif 627
This gentil king haþ caught a gret motyf
Of þis witnesse and þought he wolde enquere
Deppere in þis cas a trouthe for to lere 630

¶ Allas Custance þou nast no championñ
Ne fighte canst þou nought so weyloway
But he þat for oure redempcioñ
And bond Sathan and lith yet þer he lay 634
So be þy stronge championñ þis day
ffor but vpon þe miracle kithe
Wiþouten gilt þou schalt ben slayn as swithe 637

¶ Sche sitte hir doun on knees and þus sche sayde
Immortal god þat sauedest Susanne
ffro false blame and þou merciful mayde
Marie I mene doughter to seint Anne 641
Biforn whos child aungelis synge Osanne
If I be gilteles of þis felonie
My socour be for elles schalt I dye 644

¶ haue ye not sein som tyme a pale face/
Among a prees of him þat haþ be lad
Toward his deth wher as him get no grace/
And swich a colour in his face haþ had 648
Men mighte knowe his face þat was bystad
Amonges alle þe faces in þat route
So stant Custance and loketh hire aboute 651

¶ O queenes lyuynge in prosperite [leaf 82]
Duchesses and ȝe ladies euerichone
haue som routhe on hir aduersite
An emperoures doughter stant allone 655
Sche haþ no wight to whom to make hir moone
O blood real þat stondest in þis drede/
ffer been þi freendes at þy grete neede 658

¶ This alla king haþ such compassioñ
As gentil herte is fulfild of pite
That from his eyhen ran þe water doñ
Now hastilich do fecche a book quod he 662

And if þis knight wol swere how þat sche
This wo*m*man slough ȝit wol we vs auyse /
Whom þat we wolde þat schal be oure Iustise 665

¶ A britoñ book y-writen with eu*au*ngiles
Was fette and on þis book he swor anon
Sche giltif was in þe mene whiles
An hand him smot vpon þe nekke bon 669
That doun he felle at ones as a stoon
And boþe his eyen brust out of his face/
In sight of eu*er*y body in þat place 672

¶ A vois was herd in general audience
And seyde þou hast disclandred gilteles
The doughter of holy chirche in heigh p*re*sence
Thus hast þou doon and ȝet I moot holde my pees 676
Of þis merueyle agast was alle þe prees
As m[a]zed folk þei stooden eu*er*ychone
ffor drede of wreche saue Custance allone 679

Gret was þe drede and eek þe repentance
Of hem þat hadden wrong suspecioñ
vpon þis seely Innocent Custance
And for þis miracle in conclusioñ 683
And by Custance mediacioñ
The king and many anoþ*er* in þat place
Conuerted was þanked be goddes g*ra*ce 686

¶ This false knight was slain for his vntrouthe
By Iuggement of. alla. hastily [leaf 83, back]
And yet Custance haþ of his deth̄ gret rouþe
And after þis ih*esus*[1] of his mercy [[1] MS ihc]
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden þat is so bright and scheene
And þus haþ Crist made Custance a queene 693

¶ But who was woful if I schul nat lye
Of þis wedding but Donegilde and nomo
The kinges mooder ful of tyrannye
hir þought hir cursed herte barst/ a two 697
Sche wolde nought hir sone hadde don so
hir þought a despit þat he schulde take
So strange a creature vnto his make 700

¶ Me list nouȝt of þe chaf ne of þe stre
Make so long a tale as of þe corn
What schulde I tellen of þe realte
Of mariage or which cours goþ biforn 704
Who bloweþ in a trompe or in an horn
The fruyt of eu*er*y tale is for to seie/
Thei ete and drynke and daunce and synge and pleye 707

They gon to bedde as it was skile and right
ffor þough þat wyfes ben ful holy þinges
They moste take a pacience a night
Such manere necessaries as ben plesynges 711
To folk þat han y-wedded hem wiþ rynges
And leye a litel here holynesse asyde
As for þe time it may non oþer betyde 714

¶ On hire he gat a knaue child anon
And to a bisshop*e* and his counseil eeke
he took his wijf to kepe whan he is goon
To Scotland ward his fomen for to seeke 718
Now faire Custance þat is so humble and meeke
So longe is gon wiþ childe til þat stille
Sche halt hir chambre abydyng at cristes wille 721

¶ The tyme is come a knaue child sche beer
Mauricius atte font ston þei him call*e*
This Constable doþ forþ come a messagere [leaf 84]
And wrot to his king þat cleped was alle. 725

how þat þis blisful tyding is bifall*e*
And oþer tydynges spedful for to seye
he takeþ þe lettre and forth he goþ his weye 728

¶ This messager to don his auantage/
vnto þe kinges moder rideþ swiþe
And salueth hire ful faire in his langage
Ma dame quoþ he ȝe may be glad and bliþe 732
And thanke god an hundred þousand siþe
My lady queen haþ child wiþouten doute
To Ioye and blisse of alle þis regne aboute 735

¶ Io here þe lettres seled of þis þing
That I mot bere with al þe haste I may
If ye wole aught vnto your sone þe king
I am your s*er*uañt boþe night and day 739
Dongyld answerd as now at þis tyme nay
But heer al night I wole þou take þi rest
Tomorwe wil I seie what me lest 742

¶ This messager drank sadly ale and wyn
And stolen weren his l*ett*res priuyly
Out of his box whil he sleep as a swyn
And counterfeted was ful subtilly 746
Anoþer l*ett*re wrought ful synfully
vnto þe king direct of þis matiere
ffro his Conestable as ȝe schal after heere 749

The lettre spak þe queen deliuered was
Of so horrible a feendlich creature
That in þe Castell*e* non so hardy was
That ony while dorste þ*er*inne endur*e* 753
The mooder was an elf by auentur*e*
ycome by charmes or by sorcerie
And eu*er*y wight hateþ hire companye 756

Wo was þis king whan he þis l*ett*re hadde seyn
But to no wight he tolde his sorwes sore
But of his oughne hond he wrot ageyn
Welcome þe sonde of crist for eu*er*emore [leaf 84, back]
To me þat am now lerned in his lore
lord welcome be þi lust and þi plesance
My lust is put al in þin ordinance 763

¶ kepeth þis child al be it foul or fair*e*
And eek my wif vnto myn hom comyng
Crist whan him list may sende me an hair*e*
More agreable þan þis is to my liking 767
This lettre he seleþ priuyly wepyng
Which to þe messager was take sone
And forth he goþ þer is nomore to doone 770

¶ O messager fulfild of dronkenesse / [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Strong is þi breþ þi lymes faltren ay
And þou biwreyest alle sikernesse /
Thy mynde is lorn þou iangelest as a Iay 774
Thy face is torned in a newe aray
Ther dronkenesse regneþ in ony route
Ther nys no counseil hid wiþouten doute 777

¶ O donegild I haue non englissh digne
vnto þy malice and þy tyrannye
And þerfore to þe feend I þe resigne /
lat him enditen of þi traiterie / 781
ffy mannyssh fy o nay by god I lye
ffy feendlich spirit for I dar wel telle
Though þou here walke þy spirit is in helle / 784

¶ This messager comþ fro þe king agayn
And at þe kinges moodres court he light
And sche was of þis messager ful fain
And plesed him in al þat euer sche might 788

he drank' and wel his gerdel vnderpight'
he sleepeþ and he snorteþ[1] in his gyse [[1] MS fn . . .]
Al night' til þe sonne gan arise 791

¶ Eft' were his lettres stolen euerich on
And countrefeted l*ett*res in þis wise
The king' comandeþ his constable anon
vp peyne of' hangyng' on a heih Iuyse 795
That' he ne schulde suffre in no wise/ [leaf 85]
Custance in with his Regne for tabide
Thre dayes and a quarter of' a tyde 798

¶ But' in þe same schip as he hire fond
hire and hire ȝonge sone and all*e* hir gere
he schulde putte and croude fro þe londe
And charge hire þat' sche neuer eft' come þere 802
O my Custance wel may þi goost' haue feere/
And sleping' in þi drem ben in penaunce/
Whan Donegild caste al þis ordinance 805

¶ This messager on morwe whan he wook'
Vnto þe castel halt' þe nexte way
And to þe Constable he þe l*ett*re took'
And whan þat' he þis pitous l*ett*re say 809
fful ofte he seyde allas and weylaway
¶ lord crist' q*uo*d he how may þis lettre endur*e*
So ful of' synne is many a creature 812

¶ O mighty god if' þat' it' be þi wille
Sith þou art' rightful Iuge how may it' be
That' þou wolt' suffren Innocentz to spille
And wikke folk' regnen in prosp*er*ite 816
¶ O goode Custance allas so wo is me
That' I moot' be þi tormentour or deye
On schames deþ þer is non oþer weye 819

¶ Wepen boþe ȝonge and olde in al þat place
Whan þat þe king þis cursede l*ett*re sente
And Custance with a dedly pale face
The ferþe day toward hir schip sche wente 823
But naþeles sche takeþ in good entente
The wille of crist and knelyng in þe stronde
Sche seyde lord ay welcome be þi sonde 826

he þat me kepte fro þe false blame
Whil I was on þe lond amonges yow /
he kan me kepe from harm and eek fro schame
In salte see al þough I se not how 830
As strong as euer he was he is right now /
In him trust I and in his mooder deere [leaf 85, back]
That is to me my sail and eek my steere 833

hir litel child lay weepyng in hire arm
And knelyng pitously to him sche seide
Pees litel sone I wol do þe non harm
Wiþ þat hir couerchef of hir heed sche breyde 837
And ouer his litel eyȝen sche it leyde/
And in hir arm sche lulleth·it ful faste /
And in to heuen hir yhen vp sche caste 840

¶ Moder q*uo*d sche and mayde bright marie
Soth is þat þurgh wo*m*mannes eggement
Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to deye
ffor which þi child was on a croys y-rent 844
Thy blisful eighen saugh al his torment
Than is þer no comparison bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene 847

¶ Thou saugh þi sone y-slayn biforn þin eyen
And ȝit now lyueþ my litel child p*ar* fay
Now lady bright to whom alle woful cryen
Thow glorie of wo*m*manhod þou faire may 851

Thou hauen of refut brighte sterre of day
Rewe on my child þat of þi gentilesse
Rewest on euery rewful in distresse 854

¶ O litel child allas what is þi gilt
That neuer wroughtest synne as ȝit *par* de
Why wil þin harde fader haue þe spilt
O mercy deere Conestable q*uo*d sche 858
As lat my litel child dwelle heer wit̄h þe
And if þou darst nought sauen him for blame
So kisse him ones in his fadres name 861

¶ Ther with sche lokeþ bakward to þe lond
And sayde farewel housbonde routheles
And vp sche rist and walketh doun þe stronde
Toward þe schip hir folweþ all*e* þe prees 865
And euer sche preieþ hir child to holde his pees
And takeþ hire leeue and with an holy entent
Sche blisseþ hire and in to schip sche wente [leaf 86]

vitailled was þe schip it is no drede
habundauntly for hire ful longe space
And oþer necessaries þat scholden neede
Sche hadde ynough heried be goddes g*rac*e 872
ffor wynd and weder almighty god purchace
And brynge hir home I can no better sey
But in þe see sche dryueþ forþ hir wey 875

[*PART III.*]

Alla þe king comþ hom sone after þis /
vnto his castell*e* of þe which I tolde
And axeþ wher his wyf and his child is
The Constable gan aboute his herte colde 879

And pleynly al þe maner he him tolde
As ye han herd I can telle it no bettre
And scheweth þe king his seal and his lettre 882

And seyde lord as ȝe comaunded me
vp peyne of deth so haue I don certein
This messager tormented was til he
Moste biknowen and tellen plat and plein 886
ffrom night to night in what place he hadde leyn
And þus by witt and subtil enquerynge
ymagined was by whom þis harm gan springe 889

¶ The hond was knowe þat þe lettre wrote
And alle þe venym of þe cursed dede
But in what wise certeinly I not
The effect is þis þat alla out of drede 893
his mooder slough þat many men pleynly reede
ffor þat sche traitour was to hire ligeance /
Thus endeþ olde Donegild wiþ meschance 896

The sorwe þat þis Alla night and day
Makeþ for his wyf and for his child
Ther is no tonge þat it telle may
But now wol I vnto Custance go 900
That fleeteþ in þe see in peyne and wo
.v. yeer and more as likede cristes sonde
Ar þat hire schip approched vnto londe 903

¶ Vnder an heþen castelle atte laste [leaf 86, back]
Of which þe name in my text nouȝt I fynde
Custance and eek hir childe þe see vp caste
Almighty god þat saueþ al mankynde 907
haue on Custance and hir child som mynde
That fallen is in hethene hond eft sone
In poynt to spille as I schal telle yow soone 910

Doun fro þe Castell*e* comþ þer many a wight
To gawren on þis schip and on Custance
But schortly fro þe castel on a night
The lordes styward god yeue him meschance 914
A theef þat hadde renyed oure creance /
Com in to schip allone and seide he scholde
hir le*m*man be wher so sche wolde or nolde/ 917

¶ Wo was þis wrecchede wo*m*man þo bigon
hir child cryede and sche cried pitously
But blisful marie halp hir right anoon
ffor with hir strogelyn wel and mightily 921
The theef fel ouer bord al sodeinly
And in þe see he dreynte for vengance
And þus haþ crist / vnwemmed kept Custance 924

O foule lust of luxurie lo þin ende [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Nought / oonly þat þou fayntest mannes mynde
But verreyly þou wolt his body schende
The ende of þi werk or of þi lustes blynde 928
Is compleynyng how many oon may men fynde
That nought for werk somtyme but for þentent
To don þis synne ben eyþer slayn or schent 931

¶ how may þis weyke wo*m*man han þe strengþe
hire to defende ageyn þis renegat
O. golyas vnmesurable of lengþe
how mighte Dauid make þe so mat 935
So yonge and of armure so desolat
how dorst he loke vpon þi dredful face
Wel may men sen it was but goddes g*rac*e 938

Who yaf Iudith corage or hardynesse
To slen him Olefernus in his tent [leaf 87]
And to delyueren out of wrecchednesse
The poeple of god. I sey for þis entent 942

þat right as god spirit and vigor sent
To hem and saued hem out of meschance
So sent he mig̃ht and vigor to Custance 945

fforþ goþ hir schip forþ on þe narwe mouth
Of Iubaltar and Septe dryuyng ay
Somtyme west and som tyme north and south
And som tyme est ful many a wery day 949
Til cristes mooder blissed be sche ay
haþ schapen þurg̃h hir endeles goodnesse
To make an ende of alle hir heuynesse 952

¶ Now lat vs stynte of Custance but a þrowe
And speke we of þe Romeyn Emperour
That out of Surrie haþ þe lettres knowe
The slaughtere of cristene folk and deshonour 956
Don to his doughter by a fals traytour
I mene þe cursede wickede Sowdonesse
That at þe feste let slen boþe more and lesse 959

¶ ffor which þis Emperour haþ sent anon
his senatour wiþ real ordinance
And oþer lordes god wot many on
On Surriens to taken his vengance 963
They brennen sleen and bringen hem to meschãnce
fful many a day but schortly þis is þende
homward to Rome þei schapen hem to wende 966

This Senatour repaireth with victorie
To Romeward saylinge really
And mette þe schip dryuyng as seiþ þe storie
In which Custance sitte ful pitously 970
No þing ne knew he what sche was ne why
Sche was in swich aray ne sche nyl seye
Of hire astate þoug̃h sche scholde deye 973

he bringeþ hire to Rome and to his wijf
he yaf hire and hire ȝonge sone also
And wiþ þe Senatour sche ladde hir lyf [leaf 87, back]
Thus kan oure lady bringen out of woo 977
Woful Custance and many anoþer mo
And long tyme dwelled sche in þat place
In holy werkes euere as was hir grace 980

¶ The Senatoures wijf hir aunte was
But for al þat sche knew hir neuer þe more
I wil no lenger tarien in þis caas
But to king Alla which I spak of yore 984
That for his wyf wepeþ and sikeþ sore /
I wol retorne and lete I wil Custance
vnder þe Cenatoures gouernance / 987

¶ kyng Alla which þat hadde his moder slayn
vpon a day fil in such repentance
That iß I schortly tellen schal and playn
To Rome he comeþ to receyuen his penance 991
And put him in þe popes ordinance
In heigh and low and Ih*e*su crist besoughte
fforyeue his wikkede werkes þat he wroughte 994

¶ The fame ano þurgh Rome toun is born
how Alla king schal comen in pilgrinage
By herberiours þat wenten him biforn
ffor which þe Senatour as was vsage 998
Rood him agayn and many of his lynage
As wel to schewen his hie magnificence
As to don any king a reu*e*rence 1001

¶ Gret cheere doth þis noble Senatour
To king Alla and he to him also
Euerich of hem doþ oþer gret honour
And so bifill*e* þat in a day or tuo 1005

This Senatour is to king alla go
To feeste and schortly if I schal not lye
Custance sone is in his companye / 1008

¶ Som men wolde seyn atte requeste of Custance
This Senatour haþ lad þis child to feste
I may not tellen euerich circumstance /
Be as be may þer was he atte leste [leaf 88]
But soþ is þis þat at his moodres heste
Byforn Alla duryng þe metes space
The child stood loking in þe kinges face 1015

This alla king haþ of þe child gret wonder
And to þe Senatour he sayde anon
Whos is þat faire child þat stondeþ yonder
I not q*uo*d he by god and by seint Iohn 1019
A mooder he haþ but fader haþ he non
That I of woot and schortly in a stounde /
he tolde alla how þat þis child was founde 1022

¶ But god wot q*uo*d þis Senatour also
So vertuous a lyuere in my lyf
Ne saugh I neuer as sche ne herde of mo
Of worldly wo*m*men mayde ne of wijf 1026
I dar wel sayn sche hadde leuer a knyf
Thurghout hire brest þan ben a wo*m*man wikke
Ther is noman kowde bringe hire to þat prikke 1029

Now was þis child as lik vnto Custance /
As possible as is a creature to be
This alla haþ þe face in remembrance
Of dame Custance and þer on mused he 1033
If þat þe childes moder were aught sche /
That is his wyf and priuily he sighte
And spedde him fro þe table þat he mighte 1036

¶ Par fay he þought' þe fantome is in myn hed
I oughte demen of' skilful Iuggement
That' in þe salte see my wyf' is deed
And aftirward he made his argument 1040
What' wot' I if þat' crist' haþ hider sent'
My wyf' by see as wel as he hir sente
To my contre fro þennes þat' sche wente 1043

¶ And after non hom with þe Senatour
Goþ alla for to seen þis wonder chaunce
This Senatour doþ alla gret' honour
And hastily he sente after Custance 1047
But' trusteþ wel hire luste nought' to daunce [leaf 88, back]
Whan þat' sche wiste wherfore was þat' sonde
Vnneþe vppon hire feet' sche mighte stonde / 1050

¶ Whan alla saugh his wyf' faire he hire grette /
And wepte þat' it was reuþe for to se
ffor atte ferste look' he on hire sette /
he knew wel verrely þat' it was sche / 1054
and for sorwe as domb stant' as a tre
So was hir herte schet' in hire distresse
Whan sche remembred his vnkyndenesse / 1057

¶ Twies sche swowneþ in his owne sight'
he wepte and him excuseth pitously
Now god quod he and his halwes bright'
So wisly on my saule as haue mercy 1061
That' of' youre harm) as gilteles am I
As is Maurice my sone so lik' ȝoure face
Elles the feende me fecche out' of' þis place / 1064

¶ longe was þe sobbyng' and þe bittre peyne /
Or þat' here wofulle hertes mighte cesse /
Gret' was þe pite for to heere hem pleyne /
þurgh whiche pleyntes gan hire wo encresse / 1068

I pray ȝou alle my labour to relesse
I may not tellen hir wo vntil to morwe
I am so wery for to speke of hire sorwe 1071

¶ But finally whan þat þe soþe is wist
That Alla gilteles was of hire woo /
I trowe an hundred tymes ben þei kiste
And such a blisse is þer betwixe hem tuo 1075
That saue þe ioye þat lasteth euer emo
Ther is non lik þat ony creature
haþ seyn or schal whil þe world may dure 1078

¶ Tho preyed sche hire housbonde mekely
In relief of hir longe pitous pyne
That he wolde preye hire fader specially
That of his mageste he wolde enclyne 1082
To fouche sauf som day with̄ him to dyne
Sche preyde him eek he scholde by no weye [leaf 89]
vnto hir fader no word of hire seye 1085

¶ Some men wolde sein how þat þe child Maurice
Doþ þis message vntil þis Emperour
But as I gesse Alla was nought so nyce
To him þat was of so souereigne honour 1089
As he þat is of cristene folk þe flour
Sent eny child but it is bet to deme
he went himself and so it may wel seme 1092

¶ This Emperour hath graunted gentily
To come to dyner as he him bysought
And wel redy he lokede bisily
vpon þis child and on his doughter þought 1096
Alla goþ to his In and as him ought
Arrayed for þis feste in euery wise
As ferforth as his konnyng may suffise 1099

¶ The morwe com and alla gan him dresse
And eek[1] his wyf[1] þis Emp*er*our to meete
And forþ þey ryde in ioye and in gladnesse /
And whan sche seigh hir fader in þe strete 1103
Sche light[1] a doun and falleþ him to feet
ffader q*uo*d sche youre ȝonge child Custance
Is now ful clene out[1] of[1] ȝoure rememb*ra*nce 1106

¶ I am ȝoure doughte*r* Custance q*uo*d sche
That whilom ye sent vnto Surrye
I am I fader þat[1] in þe salte see
Was putte allone and dampned for to dye 1110
Now goode fader m*er*cy to you I crye
Send me nomore vnto non hethenesse
But[1] þonk[1] my lord heer of[1] his kyndenesse 1113

¶ Who can þe pitous Ioye tellen al
Bitwexe hem þre syn þey ben þus y-mette
But[1] of[1] my tale make an ende I schal
The day goþ faste I wol no lenger lette 1117
This glad folk[1] to dyner þey he*m* sette
In ioye and blisse at[1] mete I lete hem dwelle
A þousand fold wel more þan I can telle / [leaf 89, back]

This child maurice was sitthen Emp*er*our
Made by þe pope and lyuede cristenely
To cristes chirche he dede gret hono*ur*
But[1] I letete[1] all*e* his story passen by [[1] *so*] 1124
Of[1] Custance is my tale specially
In olde Romeyn gestes men may fynde [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
Maurices lyf[1] I bere it nought[1] in mynde 1127

¶ This king[1] Alla. whan he his tyme say
With his Custance his holy wif so sweete
To Engelond þei come þe redy way
Wher as þay lyue in ioye and in quiete 1131

But litel while it lasteþ I ȝou heete
Ioye of þis world for tyme wil nouȝt abyde
ffro day to nyght it chaungeþ as þe tyde 1134

¶ Who lyued euere in such delyt a day [*Latin note*, p. 133.]
That ne meued eyþer conscience /
Or Ire or talent of som kyn affray
Enuye or pride or passion or offense / 1138
I ne say but for þis ende þis sentence
That litel while in Ioye or in plesance
lasteþ þe blisse of alla wiþ Custance / 1141

ffor deþ þat takeþ of heigh and lough his rent
Whan passed was a yeer euene as I gesse
Out of þis world þis king Alla he hent
ffor whom Custance haþ ful gret heuynesse / 1145
Now lat vs prayen god his soule blesse /
And dame Custance finally to seye
Toward þe toun of Rome goþ hire weye 1148

To Rome is come þis holy creature
And fyndeþ hire freendes hol and sounde
Now is sche scaped alle hire auenture
And whan sche hir fader haþ I-founde 1152
Doun on hir knees falleth sche to grounde
Wepynge for tendirnesse in herte bliþe
Sche herieþ god an C. þousand sithe 1155

In vertue and holy almesdede / [leaf 90]
They lyuen alle and neuer asonder wende
Til deth departe hem þis lif þey lede
And fareþ now wel my tale is at an ende 1159
Now ihesu crist þat of his might may sende
Ioye after wo gouerne vs in his grace
And kepe vs alle þat ben in þis place / Explicit 1162

Owre oost' vpon his stiropes stood anoon [*on leaf* 90]
And seyde goode men herkeneþ eu*er*ych on
This was a thrifty tale for þe nones
Sire parissche prest' q*uo*d he for goddes boones 1166
Telle vs a tale as was þi forward yore
I se wel þat' ye lerned men in loore
Can moche good by goddes dignete
The p*ar*sonn him answerde benedicite 1170
What' eyleþ þe man so synfully to swere /
Oure ost' answerde. O Ianekyn be ye þere
I smelle a lollere in þe wynd quod he
how goode men q*uo*d oure host' herkeneþ me 1174
Abydeþ for goddes digne passionn
ffor we schal han a predicacionn
This lollere heer wil prechen vs som what'
Nay by my fader soule þat' schal he nat 1178
Seyde þe Esquier heer schal he nat' preche
He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche
he leueþ all in þe grete god he
he wolde sowen som difficulte 1182
Or springen Cokkel in oure clene corn
And þ*er*fore oost' I warne þe biforn
My Ioly body schal a tale telle
And I schal clynken ȝou so mery a belle 1186
That' I schal waken al þis compaignie
But' it schal not' ben of' philosophie
Ne Phislyas ne termes queinte of' lawe
Ther is but' litel latyn in my nawe 1190

[*The Squire's Tale follows in the MS.*]

Owre oost' vpon his stiropes stood anoon [on leaf 90]
And seyde goode men herkeneþ eu*er*ych on
This was a thrifty tale for þe nones
Sire parissche prest' q*uo*d he for goddes boones 1166
Telle vs a tale as was þi forward yore
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Abydeþ for goddes digne passioñ
ffor we schal han a predicacioñ
This lollere heer wil prechen vs som what'
Nay by my fader soule þat' schal he nat 1178
Seyde þe Esquier heer schal he nat' preche
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Ther is but' litel latyn in my nawe 1190

Library

AT Sarray in þe land of Tartarye [leaf 90, back]
Ther dwelt a king þat werreyed Russye
Thurgh which þer deyed many a doughty man
This noble king was cleped kambynskan 12
Which in his tyme was of so gret renoñ
That þer nas nowher in no regioñ
So excellent a lord in alle þing
him lacked nought þat longed to a kyng 16
As of þe secte of which þat he was born
he kepte his lay to which þat he was sworn
And þerto he was hardy wys and riche
And pitous and Iust alwey y-liche 20
Soþ of his word benigne and honorable
Of his corage as eny centre stable centrum circuli
yong freissh and strong in armes desirous
As eny bacheler of alle his hous 24
A fair persone he was and fortunat
And kepte alway so wel real astat
That þer nas no wher swich anoþer man
This noble king this Tartre Kambynskan 28
hadde tuo sones in Eltheta his wyf
Of which þe eldest highte Algarsyf
That oþer was y-cleped Camballo
A doughter hadde þis worþy king also 32
That yongest was and highte Canace
But for to telle you al hire beaute
It lyþ nought in my tonge ne in my konnyng
I dar not vndertake so heigh a þing 36

Myn englissch̄ eek' is insufficient
It' moste ben a Rethor excellent'
That' coupe his colours longyng' for þat art'
If' he schulde hir discryue in any part 40
I am non swich I moot' speke as I can
And so bifelle that' whan þis Cambynskan
haþ twenty wynter born his Diademe
As he was wonte fro yeer to yeer I deeme 44
he leet' þe feste of' his natiuite [leaf 91]
Don cryen þurgh̄ Sarray his Cite
The laste Idus of' March̄ after þe ȝeer
Phebus þe sonne Iolif' was and cleer 48
ffor he was neigh̄ his exaltacion̄
In martes face and his mansion̄
In aries þe Colerik' þe hote signe
fful lusty was þe weder and benigne 52
ffor which þe foules aȝein þe sonne sshene
What' for þe seson̄ and þe yonge grene
fful loude songe hire affections
hem semed han geten hem protections 56
Aȝein þe swerd of' wynter keene and cold
This Kambynskan of' which I haue ȝou told
In Real vestiment' sit' on his deys
With dyademe ful heigh in his paleys 60
And halt' his feste solempne and so riche
That' in þis world ne was þer non it' liche
Of' which if' I schal telle al þe array
Than wold it' occupye a someres day 64
And eek' it' needeþ nat' to deuyse
At euery cours þe ordre of' here seruise
I wol not' tellen of' here straunge sewes
Ne of' here swannes ne of' here heron̄-sewes 68
Ek' in þat' lond as tellen knightes olde
Ther is som mete þat' is ful deynte holde
That' in þis lond men recche but' smal
Ther nys no man þat' may reporten al 72

I wol not tarien yow for it is prime
And for it is no fruyt but los of tyme
vnto my first purpos I wole haue my recours /
And so bifelle þat after þe þridde cours 76
Whil þat þis king sit þus in his nobleye
herknyng his menstreles here þinges pleye
Biforn him atte bord deliciously
In atte halle dore al sodeinly 80
Ther com a knight vpon a steede of bras [leaf 91, back]
And in his hond a brood Mirour of glas
vpon his thombe he hadde of gold a ryng
And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng 84
And vp he rydeþ to þe heihe bord
In alle þe halle ne was þer spoke a word
ffor merueille of þis knight him to biholde
fful bysyly þey wayten ȝonge and olde / 88
This strange knight þat com þus sodeynly
Al armed saue his heed ful richely
Salued þe king and queen and lordes alle
By ordre as þey seten in þe halle 92
with so heigh reuerence and obeissances
As wel in speche as in contenances
That Gawayn with his olde curtesye /
Though he com agayn out of fayrie / 96
Ne couþe him nought amende wiþ no word
And after þis bifore þe heihe bord
he with a manly vois sayde his message
After þe forme vsed in his langage 100
wiþoute vice of Sillable or of *lettre*
And for his tale scholde seme þe bettre
Acordant to his wordes was his chere /
As techeþ art of speche hem þat it lere / 104
Al be it þat I can nat sowne his stile
Ne can not clymben ouer so heigh a style
yet/ seye I þis þat as to co*m*mune entente
Thus moche amounteþ al þat euer he mente 108

If it so be þat I haué it in my mynde
he seyde þe king of Arabie and of Inde
My liege lord on þis solempne day
Saluеþ ȝou as he best can and may 112
And sendeþ yow in hono*ur* of your feste
By me þat am redy at al your heste /
This steede of Bras þat esily and wel
kan in þe space of a day naturel 116
This is to seie in .xxiiij^ti^. houres [leaf 92]
Wher so yow list in drought̄e or in schoures
Beren youre body in to euery place /
To which youre herte wilneth for to pace 120
wiþoute wem of ȝou þorugh foul or fair
Or if ȝou list to flee as hye in þair
As doþ an Egle whan him list to sore
This same steede schal bere ȝou eu*er*emore 124
wiþouten harm til ye be þer you leste
Thouḡh þat ȝe slepen on his bak or reste
And torne aȝayn wiþ wryþing of a pyn
he þat it wroughte couþe ful many a gyn 128
he waitede many a constellacōñ
Or he hadde do þis op*er*aciōñ
And knew ful many a seal and many a bond
This Mirour eek þat I haue in my*n* hond 132
haþ such a migh̄t that men may in it see
whan þer schal fallen any aduersite
Vnto youre regne or to your self also
And openly who is ȝour frend or foo 136
And ouer al þis if ony lady brigh̄t
haþ set hire herte on any maner wigh̄t
If he be fals sche schal his traysoñ se
his newe loue and al his subtilite 140
So openly þat þer schal no þing hyde
wherfore ageyn þis lusty somer tyde
This mirour and þis ryng as ye may see /
he haþ sent to my lady Canacee 144

youre excellent doughter þat is heere
The vertu of þis ring if ȝe wol heere
Is þis . þat if hir list it for to were /
vpon hir þombe or in hir purs it bere 148
Ther is no foule þat fleigh vnder þe heuene
þat she ne schal vnderstonde his steuene
And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn
And answere him in his langage ageyn 152
And eu*er*y gras þat groweþ vpon a roote / [leaf 92, back]
Sche schal wel knowe and whom it wol do boote
Al be his woundes neuer so deepe and wyde
This naked sword þat hongeth by my syde 156
Swich vertu haþ þat what man so ye smyte
Thurghout his armour it wole kerue and byte
Were it as þikke as is a braunched oke
And what man þat is wounded wiþ þe stroke 160
Schal neuer be hol til þat yow list of grace
To stroke him wiþ þe plat in þilke place
Ther he is hurt þis is as moche to sayn
ye moote with þe platte sword agayn 164
Stroke him on þe wounde and it wil close
This is a v*er*ray soth wiþouten glose
It failleþ noght whiles it is in youre hold
And whan þis knight haþ þus his tale told 168
he rydeth out of þe halle and doun he light
his steede which þat schon as sonne bright
Stant in þe court stille as ony stoon
This knight in to his chambr*e* is lad anoon 172
And is vnarmed and to þe mete y-set
The p*re*sentes ben ful richely y-fet
This is to sein þe sword and þe mirour
And born anon vnto þe hihe tour 176
Wiþ certein officers ordeyned þ*er*fore
And vnto Canacee þe ryng is bore
Solempnely þer sche sitt atte table
But sikerly wiþouten eny fable / 180

The hors of bras þat may nat be remewed
It stant as it were to þe ground y-glewed
Ther may noman out of þe place it dryue
ffor non engyn of wyndas or polyue / 184
And cause why for þey can nouȝt þe craft
And þerfore in the place þei han it laft
Til þat þe knight haþ taught hem þe maneere
To voyden him as ȝe schal after heere 188
Gret was þe prees þat swarmed to and fro [leaf 93]
To gauren on þis hors þat stondeþ so
ffor it so heih was and so brood and long
So wel p*ro*porciouned for to be strong 192
Right as it were a steede of lumbardye
Ther with so horsly and so quyk of ye
As it a gentil poyleys courser were
ffor certes fro his tail vnto his eere 196
Nature ne art ne couþe him nought amende
In no degre as al þe poeple wende
But euermore here mooste wonder it was
how þat it cowde gon and was of Bras 200
It was of ffaierye as þe peple semede
diu*er*se folk diu*er*sely han demede
As many heedes as many wittes þ*er* been
They murmerede as don a swarm of been 204
And maden skyles after here fantasyes
Rehersyng of þe olde poetries .i. eq*us* pedasdus
And seyden it was lik þe Pagasee
The hors þat hadde wynges for to flee 208
Or elles it was þe Grekes hors Synoñ
That broughte troye to destructioñ
As men in þise olde gestes reede
Myn herte quod oon is eu*er*emore in drede 212
I trowe som men of armes ben þer Inne
That schapen hem þis cite for to wynne
It were right good þat alle swich þing were knowe
Anoþer rowned to his felawe lowe 216

And seyde he lyeth for it is raþere lik
An apparence y-maad by som magyk
As Iogelours pleyen at þese festes grete /
Of sondry þoughtes þus þey Iangle and trete 220
As lewed peple demeþ com*m*unly
Of þinges þat been more maad subtily
Than þey can in here lewednesse comp*r*ehende /
They demen gladly to þe baddere ende 224
And some of hem wondren on þe miro*ur* [leaf 93, back]
That born was vp vnto þe maistre tour
how men might in it suche þinges se
Anoþer answerde and seyde it might wel be 228
Naturelly by composicioñs
Of aungels and of sleygh reflexioñs
And seyde þat in Rome was such oon
They speke of alocen and vitilion 232
And of aristotle þat writen in here lyues
Of queinte mirours and of p*er*spectyues
As knowen þey þat han here bookes herde
And oþer folk han wondred on þe swerde 236
That wolde perce þurgh euery þing
And fille in speche of Thelophus þe king
And of achilles for his queinte spere /
ffor he couþe with it boþe hele and dere / 240
Right in swich wise as men may wiþ þe swerd
Of which right now ye haue youre seluen herd
They speken of sondry hardyng of metall*e*
And speke of medicynes þer wiþall*e* 244
And how and whanne it scholde harded be
Which is ynknowe algate vnto me /
Tho speeke þey of Canaces ryng
And seyden all*e* þat swich a wonder þing 248
Of craft of rynges herde þey neuere non
Saue þat he moyses and king Salomon
hadde a name of konnyng in swich art
Thus seyen þe peple and drawen hem a part 252

But naþeles somme seyde þat it was
Wonder to maken of fern aisshen glas
And ȝit is glas not lik aisshen of fern
But for þey han knowen it so fern 256
Therfore ceseþ here Ianglyng and here wonder
As sore wondren some on cause of þonder
On ebbe and flood on gossomer and on myst /
And alle þing til þe cause is wist [leaf 94] 260
Thus Ianglen þei and demen and deuyse
Til þat þe king gan fro his bord arise
¶ Phebus haþ laft þe angle meridional
And ȝit ascendyng was þe best roial 264
The gentil leoñ wiþ his Aldrian
Whan þat þis Tartre kyng Kambynskan
Ros from his bord ther as he sat ful hye
Biforn him goþ þe lowde menstralcie / 268
Til he com to his chambre of paramentz
Ther as þey sownen diuerse instrumentz
That is lik an heuene for to heere /
Now dauncen lusty venus children deere 272
ffor in þe fisshe hir lady sat ful hye Piscis
And lokeþ on hem with a freendy yhe
This noble king is set vp on his troone
This straunge knight is fet to him ful sone / 276
And on þe daunce he goþ with Canacee
here is þe reuel and þe Iolite
That is nat able a dul man to deuyse /
he moste han knowe loue and his seruise / 280
And ben a festlich man as freisch as may
That scholde ȝow deuisen such array
who couþe telle yow þe forme of daunces
So vncouthe and such freissche continaunces 284
Swich subtile lokynges and dissimulynges
ffor drede of Ialouseye mennes aperceyuynges
Noman but lañcelet and he is deed
Therfore I passe ouer al þis lustyhed 288

I say nomore but in þis Iolynesse
I lete hem til men to sop*er* hem dresse
The stiward bit spices for to hye
And eek þe wyn in al þis melodye 292
The vssheres and þe squyers ben y-gon
The spices and þe wyn is come anon
They eete and dronke and whan þis hadde an ende
vnto þe temple as resoun was þey wende [leaf 91, back]
¶ The seruise doon. þey soupen al by day
What needeþ you rehersen here aray
Ech man woot wel þat at/ a kinges feste
haþ plente to þe meste and to þe leste 300
And deyntees mo þan ben in my knowyng
And after soup*er* goþ þis noble king
To seen þis hors of bras wiþ al a route
Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute 304
Swich wondryng was þer on þis hors of bras
That siþþen þe grete seege of Troye was
Ther as men wondren on an hors also
Ne was þer swich a wondryng as was þo / 308
But finally þe king askeþ þe knight
The vertue of þis courser and þe might
And preyde him to telle his gouernance
The hors anon bigan to trippe and daunce 312
Whan þat þis knight layde hond vpon his reyne /
And seyde sire þer is namore to seyne
But whan þou list to ryden eny where
ye moote trille a pyn stant in his eere 316
which I schal telle you bitwen vs tuo /
ye moot nempne him to what place also
Or to what Contre þat yow list to ryde
And whan ye come þer as yow list tabyde 320
Bid him descende and trille anoþer pyn
ffor þer-in liþ þeffect of al þat gyn
And wole doun descende and don your wille
And in þat place he wol abyde stille 324

þeigh alle þe world hadde þe contrarie swore
he schal not þennes be þrowe ne y-bore
Of if yow liste bidde him þennes gon
Trille þis pynne and he wil vanyssche anon 328
Out of þe sight of euery maner wight
And come ayein be it day or night
whan þat yow list to clepen him agayn
In swich a gyse as I schal to yow sayn [leaf 95] 332
Bitwixen yow and me and þat ful soone
Ryd whan yow list þer is no more to doone
Enformed whan þe kyng was of þe knight
And haþ conceyued in his witt aright 336
The maner and þe forme of alle þis þing
fful glad and bliþe þe noble doughty kyng
Repeyryng to his reuel as biforn
The brydel is in to þe tour y-born 340
And kept among his Ieweles lief and diere
The hors vanyssht y not in what manere
Out of here sight ye gete namore of me
But þus I lete in lust and Iolite 344
This Kambynskan his lordes festeynge
Til wel neigh þe day bigan to springe ¶ Explicit *prima pars*

¶ The Stag of an hert

¶ The norice of digestioñ is slepe
Gan on hem wynke and bad hem take kepe 348
That moche mete and labour wol haue reste /
And with a galpyng hem alle he keste /
And seyde þat it was tyme to lye a doun
ffor blood was in his *dominacioñ* 352
Cherisshe þ blood natures frend quod he
þey þanken him galpynge by tuo by þre
And euery wight gan drawen him to his reste
As sleep hem bad þey tooke it for þe beste 356

here dremes schulle not mowe be told for me
fful were here heedes of fumosite
That causeþ drem of which þer is no charge /
They sleepen til it was pryme large / 360
The moste part but it were Canace
Sche was ful mesurable as wo*m*men be
ffor of hire fader hadde sche take hir leeue
To go to reste sone after it was eue 364
hir list not appalled for to be
ffor on þe morwe vnfestlich for to see /
And slepte hir ferste sleep and awok [leaf 95, back]
ffor swich a ioye sche in hir herte took 368
Boþe of hire queynte ryng and hire mirour
That twenty tyme sche chaungeth hire colour
And in hire sleep right for impression
Of hire mirour sche hadde a vision 372
Wherfore ar þat þe sonne vp gan glyde
Sche cleped vp on hire maystresse bysyde
And seyde þat hir liste for to arise
Thise olde wo*m*men þat ben gladly wyse 376
As is hire maystresse answerde anon
And seyde ma dame whider wolde ye gon
Thus erely for folk ben all*e* in reste
I wole quod sche arise for me leste / 380
No lengere sleepen but walken aboute
hire maistresse clepeþ wo*m*men a gret route /
And vp þey risen wel ten or twelue
vp riseþ freisshe Canace hir selue 384
As rody as bright as þey þe yonge sonne
That in þe Ram. is ten degrees vpronne
Non hiher was he whan sche redy was
And forth sche walkede eesyly a pas 388
Arrayed after þe lusty sesoñ soote
lightly for to pleye and walke on foote
Nat but .v. or .vj. of hire meyne
And in a trench fer in þe park goþ sche 392

The vapour which þat fro þe erþe glood
makeþ þe sonne to seeme rody and brood
But napeles it was so fair a sight
That it made alle here hertes for to light 396
What for þe sesoun and þe morwenynge
And for þe foules þat sche herde synge
ffor right anon sche wiste what þey mente
Right by here song and knew alle here entente 400
// The knotte why þat euery tale is told
If it be taryed til lust be cold
Of hem þat han it herkned after yore [leaf 96]
The sauour passeþ euer lenger þe more 404
ffor fulsomnesse of prolixite
And by þis same resoun þenkeþ me
I scholde to þe knotte condescende
And maken of hire walkyng sone an ende 408
¶ Amydde a tree for-drye as whit as chalk/
As Canacee was pleyng in hire walk
Ther sat a ffaukoñ ouer hir heed ful hye
That with a pitous voys so gan to crye 412
That al þe woode resede of hire crye
And beten hadde hire self so pitously /
With boþen hire wynges til þe reede blood
Ran endelong/ þe tree þer as sche stood 416
And euer in oon sche cryed alwey and schrighte
And with hire beek hir seluen so sche pighte
That þer ne was tygre ne cruel beste
That duelleþ eyþer in woode or in foreste 420
þat nolde han wept if þat he wepe couþe
ffor sorwe of hire sche schright alwey so louþe
ffor þer nas neuere yit/ no man on lyue
If þat I couþe a fawkoñ wel descryue 424
That herde of such anoþer of fayrnesse
As wel of plumage as of gentilnesse
Of schap of al þat mighte rekened be
A fawkoñ peregryn þanne semed sche 428

Of fremde londe and euermore as sche stood
Sche swounede now and now for lak of blood
Til wel neigh is sche fallen fro þe tree
This faire kinges doughter þis kanacee 432
That on hir fynger bar þe queynte ryng
þurgh which sche vnderstood wel euery þing
That any foul may in his ledne sayn
And kowde answere him in his ledne agayn 436
haþ vnderstande þat þis fawkon sayde
And wel neigh for þe rouþe almost sche deyde
And to þe tree sche goþ ful hastily [leaf 96, back]
And on þis fawkon lokeþ pitously 440
And held hire lappe abrood for wel sche wiste /
The fawkon moste falle from þe twyste /
whan þat it swownede next for lakke of blood
A long while to wayte hire sche stood 444
Til atte laste sche spak in þis maneere
Vnto þe hauk as ȝe schal after heere
what is þe cause if it be for to telle
That ye ben in þis furial peyne of helle 448
Quod Canacee vnto þis hawk aboue
Is þis for sorwe of deth or los of loue
ffor as I trowe þise beþ causes tuo
That causen moost a gentil herte woo 452
Of oþer harm it redeþ nought/ to speke
ffor þi your self vpon your self yow wreke
which þat proueþ wel þat eyþer Ire or drede
Moot ben enchesoñ of youre cruel dede 456
Syn þat I se non oþer wight yow chace
ffor loue of god so doþ your selue grace
Or what may be your help for west nor est
Ne saugh I neuer er now no bryd ne best 460
That ferde with himself so pitously
ye slee me with youre sorwe verrayly
I haue of yow so gret compassioun
ffor goddes loue com fro þe tree a doun 464

And as I am a kinges doughter trewe
If þat I verraily þe causes knewe
Of youre disease if it lay in my might
I wolde amende it or þat it were night 468
Als wisly help me grete god of kynde
And herbes schal I right ynowe fynde
To hele wiþ ȝour hurtes hastily
Tho schrighte þis faukoñ yet more pitously 472
Than euer sche dide and fil to grounde anon
And liþ on swowne deed as ony stoon
Til Canacee haþ in hir lappe hire take [leaf 97]
vnto þat tyme sche gan of swowne awake / 476
And after þat sche of swowne gan abreide
Right in hir hawkes leodne þus sche seyde
That pite renneth sone in gentil herte
ffeelyng his similitude in peynes smerte / 480
Is proued alday as men may it see
As wel by werk as by auctorite
ffor gentil herte kepeþ gentillesse
I se wel þat ye han of my distresse 484
Compassioñ my faire Canace /
Of verray wo*m*manly benignite /
That nature in youre p*r*inciples haþ set
But for non hope for to fare þe bet 488
But for to obeye vnto youre herte fre /
And for to maken oþer be war by me /
As by þe whelp chastised is þe leoñ
Right for þat cause and for þat conclusioñ 492
Whil þat I haue a leyser and a space
Myn harm I wol confessen er I pace
And euer whil sche can hir sorwe tolde
That oþer wepte as sche to water wolde 496
Til þat þe fawkoñ bad hir to be stille /
And with a sike þus sche seyde hire tille
Ther I was bred allas þat ilke day
And fostred in a roche of marbul gray 500

So tendrely þat noþing eylede me
I ne wiste nought what was aduersite
Til I couþe flee ful hye vnder þe sky
þo dwelte a tercelet me faste by 504
That semede welle of alle gentilnesse
Al were he ful of tresoñ and falsnesse /
It is wrapped vnder humble cheere
And vnder hiew of trouþe and in swich manere 508
Vnder plesance and vnder bysy peyne
That no wight couþe han wende he coude feyne
So deepe in greyn he dyed his colours [leaf 97, back]
Right as a serpent hit him vnder flours 512
Til he may se his tyme for to byte
Right so þis god of loues ypocrite
Doþ so his cerymonijs obeissances
And kepte in semblañt alle his obseruances 516
That sowneþ in to gentilesse of loue
As in a tombe is al þe faire aboue
And vnder is þe corps swich as ȝe woot
Swich was þis ypocrite boþe cold and hoot 520
And in þis wise he serued his entente
That saue þe feende non wiste what he mente
Til he so longe hadde wopen and compleyned
And many a yeer his seruise to me feyned 524
Til þat myn herte to pitous and to nyce
Al Innocent of his crowned malice
ffor-fered of his deþ as þoughte me
vpon his oþes and his seurte 528
Grauntede him loue vpon þis condicioñ
That euer mo myn honour & renoūn
were saued boþe preuy and apert
This is to sein þat after his dissert 532
I yaf him al myn herte and my þought
God woot and he þat oþer wise nought
And tok his herte in chaunge of myn for ay
But soþ is seyd go sethen many a day 536

A trewe wight and a þeef þenkeþ nat oon
And whan he saugh þe þing so fer y-gon
That I grauntede him fully my loue /
In swich a gyse as I haue sayd aboue / 540
And yeuen him my trewe herte as fre /
As he swore he yaf his herte to me /
Anon þis Tygre ful of doublenesse
fil on his knees wiþ so deuoute humblesse 544
wiþ hye reuerence and as by his cheere /
So lik a gentil louere of manere /
So rauysshed as it semede for þe ioye [leaf 98]
That neuere Iason ne paris of Troye 548
Iason certes ne non oþer man
Syn lameth was þat Aldirfirst bygan
To louen tuo as writen folk biforn
Ne neuer siþþe þe firste man was born 552
Ne couþe man by twenty þousand part
Countrefete þe sophimes of his art
Ne were worþi to vnbokele his galoche
Ther doublenesse or feynyng scholde aproche 556
Ne so couþe þanke a wight as he dide me /
his manere was an heuene for to se
Til eny wo*mm*an were sche neuer so wys
So peynted he and kembeþ at poynt devys 560
As wel his wordes as his continañce
And I so loued him foı his obeissañce
And for þe trouþe I demed in his herte
That if so were þat any þing him smerte 564
Al were it neuer so lite and I it wiste
Me þoughte I felte deþ at myn herte twiste
And schortly so ferforth þis þing went
That my wille has his willes Instrument 568
This is to sein my wille obeyede his wille
In alle þing as fer as resoñ fille
Kepyng þe boundes of my worschipe euere
Ne neuer hadde I þing so leef ne leuere 572

As him god wootꝫ ne neuere schal no mo
This laste lengere þan a yer or tuo
¶ Thatꝫ I supposed ofꝫ him no þingꝫ but good
Butꝫ fynally þus atte laste it stood 576
Thatꝫ fortune wolde þatꝫ he moste twynne
Outꝫ ofꝫ þatꝫ place which þatꝫ I was Inne
Wher me was wo itꝫ is no questioñ
I kan notꝫ make ofꝫ itꝫ discripcioñ 580
ffor o þingꝫ dar I telle boldely
I knowe whatꝫ is þe peyne ofꝫ deþ þer by
Such harm I felte for he ne mighte beleue [leaf 98]
So on a day ofꝫ me he tokꝫ his leue / 584
So sorwfully eekꝫ I wende verrayly
Thatꝫ he hadde feeled as moche harm as I
Whan þatꝫ I herde him speke and sawe his hewe /
Butꝫ naþeles I þoughte he was so trewe/ 588
And eekꝫ þatꝫ he repaire scholde agayn
Wiþinne a litel while soþ to sayn
And resoñ wolde eekꝫ þatꝫ he moste go
ffor his honour as ofte happeþ so 592
Thatꝫ I made vertu ofꝫ necessite /
& tookꝫ itꝫ wel syn þatꝫ it / moste be
As I bestꝫ mighte I hidde from him my sorwe
And tookꝫ him by þe hond seintꝫ Iohñ to borwe 596
And seyde þus lo I am youres al
Beþ swich as I haue be to yow and schal
Whatꝫ he answerde itꝫ needeþ natꝫ reherse
Who can seyn betꝫ þan he who can do werse 600
Whan he haþ al wel seyd þan haþ he doon
Therfore byhoueþ him a wel longꝫ spoon
Thatꝫ schal eten wiþ a feend þus herde I seye /
So atte laste he mootꝫ forþ his weye 604
And forthñ he fleþ til he com þer him leste
Whan itꝫ com him to purpos for to reste /
I trowe he hadde þilke textꝫ in mynde / ¶ Reditui suo singula gaudent/.
Thatꝫ alle þingꝫ repeyryngꝫ to his kynde / 608

Gladeþ himself / þus seyn men as I gesse /
Men louen of propre kynde newfangilnesse /
As briddes doon þat men in cages feede /
ffor þeigh þou night & day take of hem heede / 612
And strawe here cages faire as softe as silk
And yeue hem sucre hony bred and mylk
Yet right anon as þat his dore is vppe
he wiþ his feet wil sporne doun his cuppe 616
And to þe woode he wole and wormes ete
So newefangel ben þei of here mete
And louen noueleries of propre kynde [leaf 99]
No gentilesse of blood may hem bynde 620
So ferde þis tercelet allas þe day
Though he were gentil born fressche and gay
And goodly for to seen and humble and fre
he saugh vpon a tyme a kyte flee 624
And sodeinly he loued þe kyte so
That alle his loue is clene fro me go
And haþ his trouþe falsed in þis wyse
Thus haþ þe kite my loue in hire seruise 628
And I am lorn wiþoute remedye
And wiþ þat word þis faukoñ gan to crye
And swouned eft/ in Canacees barm
Gret was þe sorwe for þe haukes harm 632
That Canacee and alle hire wommen maade
They nyste how þey mighte þe fawkoñ glade
But Canacee home bereþ hire in hire lappe
And softely in plastres gan hire wrappe 636
Ther as sche with hir beek haþ hurt hir selue
Now kan not Canace but herbes delue
Out of þe grounde and maken salues newe
Of herbes preciouses and fyn of hewe 640
To helen wiþ þe hauk fro day to nyght
Sche doþ hir besynesse and alle hire myght
And by hire beddes heed sche made a muwe
And couered it with veluettes bluwe 644

In signe of troupe pat is in wo*m*men seene
And alle wipoute pe muwe is peynted greene
In which were peynted alle pese false fowles
As ben pise tydifs tercelettes and owles 648
Right for pe spyte were peynted hem bysyde
Pyes on hem for to crye and chyde
Thus leet I Canacee hire hawk keeping
I wole nomore as now speke of hire ryng 652
Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
how pat pis ffaukon gat hire loue ageyn
Repentañt as pe storie telleþ vs [leaf 99, back]
By mediacioñ of Camballus 656
The kinges sone of which I yow tolde /
But hennes forth I wol p*roces* holde
To speke of auentures and of batailles
That yet was neuer herde so gret meruailles 660
ffirst wil I telle yow of Kambynskan
That in his tyme many a cite wan
And after wol I speke of Algarsif
how pat he wan Theodora to his wyf 664
ffor whan ful ofte in gret p*er*il he was
Ne hadde he ben holpen by pe hors of bras
And after wol I speken of Camballo
That faught in listes with pe bre*þer*en tuo 668
ffor Canacee er pat he mig̃ht hir wynne
And þer I lefte I wol ageyn bygynne
Appolo whirleth vp his char so hye Apollo i. sol.
Til pat pe god mercurius hous pe slye / ¶ Explicit .ij^a^ p*ars*.

GROUP D. FRAGMENT V.

§ 1. WIFE OF BATH'S PREAMBLE.

CORPUS MS.

P*ro*log*us* vx*or*is de Bathe. [*headline*] [leaf 100]

¶ P*ro*log*us* vx*or*is de Bathe .C°.vij°.

Experiment' þoughh non auctorite
Were in þis world is right' ynoughh for me
To speke of' wo þat' is in mariage
ffor lordynges syn I twelue ȝeer was of' age / 4
Thanked be god þat' is eterne alyue
housbondes atte chirche dore I haue had fyue/
If' I so often might' haue wedded be
But' all*e* were worþy men in here degre 8
But' me was told certein nought' longe agones
[that criste ne wente / neu*er*e but onys] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
To weddyng' in þe Cane of' Galile /
That' by þilke ensample taught' he me 12
That' I ne schulde wedded be but' ones
herk' eek' lo which a scharpe worde for þe nones
Besyde a welle Ih*es*u god and man
Spak' in repreef' of' þe Samaritan 16
Thow hast' y-hadde .v. housebondes quod he.
And þat' ilke man þat' now haþ þe
Is not' þin housbonde þus sayde he certayne
What' he mente þer-by I can noughht sayne 20
Wele But' þat/ I axe why þe fyfte man
Was non housbonde to þe Samaritan
how many might' sche han in mariage 23
[1]ȝitt' hardde I neu*er*e telle in al myn age [[1] *This line is by another hand, over an erasure.*]

Vppon þis nombre diffinicio*un*
Men may deuyne and glosen vp and doun
But wel I woot expresse wiþouten lye
God bad vs for to wexe and multiplye 28
That gentil text can I wel vnderstonde
Eke wel I woot he seyde myn housebonde
Schulde lete fader & mooder and take to me ¶ Relinquet ho*m*o pa*t*rem & matre*m* & adherebit &c/
But of noon nombre mensioñ made he /
Of Bigamye or of Octogamye 33
Why schulde men þenne haue it in vilanye /
loke here þe wise man king Salomon
I trowe he hadde wyues moo þan on ¶ Genes*is* ij°. Q*ua*mobrem
Now wolde god it leeful were to me / 37
To be refreisshed half so ofte as he [leaf 100, back]
Which ȝifte of god hadde he for all*e* his wyues
No man haþ such þat in þis world a lyue is 40
God wot þis noble king as to my witte
The firste night hadde many a mery fitte
Wiþ iche of hem so wel was him alyue
Blissed be god þat I haue wedded fyue 44
Welcome þe sixte whan þat euer he schal
ffor siþþe I wille nought kepe chaste in al
Whan myn housebonde is fro þe world y-gon
Som crystne man schal wedde me anon 48
ffor þan þe apostle seiþ þat I am free
To wedde a goddes half wher it likeþ me
he seiþ þat to be wedded is no senne ¶ Meli*us est* nubere qu*am* vri
Betre is it to be wedded þan to brenne 52
What rekkeþ me þough folk sey vylanye
Of schrewed lameth and his Bygamye /
I woot wel Abrah*a*m was an holy man
And Iacob eek as fer as euer I can 56
And ech of hem hadde wyues mo þan tuo
And many anoþer holy man also
Wher can ȝe say in any maner age
That vs god defended mariage 60

By expresse word I pray yow telleþ me
Or wher comaunded he v*ir*ginite
I wot' as wel as ye it' is no drede
þe apostel whan he spekeþ of' maydenhede 64
he seyde þer-of' precepte hadde he noone
Men may counseille a wo*m*man to ben oone
But' counseilling' is no comaundeme*n*t
he putte it' in oure owne Iuggement' 68
ffor hadde god co*m*maunded maydenhede
þanne hadde he dampned weddyng' with þe dede
And certes if' þer were no seed y-sowe
virginite þanne wher-of' scholde it' growe 72
Poule dorste nought' comanden at' þe leste
A þing' of' which his mayster ȝaf' him non heste [leaf 101]
The darte is sette vppe fro virginite
Chase who so may who so renneþ best' lat' see 76
But' þis word is nought' take of' euery wight'
But' þere as god wolde yeue it' of' his might'
I wot' wel þat' þe apostel was a mayde /
But' naþeles þough þat' he wrot' or sayde 80
he wolde þat' euery wight' were such as he /
Al nys nat' but' counseile to v*ir*ginite
And for to be a wijf' he yaf' me leue
Of' Indulgence so is it' no repreue 84
To wedde me if' þat' my make deye /
Wiþoute excepcioñ of' Bygamie /
Al were it good no wo*m*man for to touche
he mente as his body or in his couche 88
ffor p*er*il is boþe to touche and for to assemble
ȝe knowe what' þis ensample may resemble
This al and some he heeld v*ir*ginite
More p*er*fyt' þan wedded in freelte 92
ffreltee clepe I not' but' þat' he and sche
Wolde leede here lijf' al in chastite
I g*ra*unte it' wel I haue non envye
Though maydenhede preferre Bygamye 96

GROUP D. § 1. WIFE'S PREAMBLE. **Corpus MS.**

It' likeþ hem to be clene in body and gost'
Of' myn estate I wole make no boost'
ffor wel ȝe knowe a lord in his houshold
haþ not' euery vessele of' golde / 100
Some ben of' tree / and doon here lord seruise
God clepeþ folk' to him in sondry wise
And euerich haþ of' god a *pro*pre ȝifte /
Some þis some þat' as him likeþ schifte 104
virginite is gret' *per*fectioñ
And conscience eek' with deuocioñ
But' crist' þat' of' *per*fectioñ is welle
Bad nought' euery wight' he schulde selle 108
Al þat' he hadde and ȝiue it to þe pore
And in swich wise folwe him and his lore [leaf 101, back]
he spak' to hem þat' wolde lyue parfitly ¶ Mathei xix°. Dix*it* a*utem* ih*esus* vade & vende *omn*ia que h*abes* & da paup*eribus*
And lordynges by ȝoure leue þat' am not' I
I wole bystowe þe flour of' all*e* myn age 113
In charite and fruyt' of' maryage
Telle me also to what' conclusioñ
Were membres maade of' generacioñ 116
And of' so p*ar*fyt' wise and why y-wrought'
Tristeþ right' wel þey were not' made for nought
Glose who so wile and seye boþe vp and doun
That' þey were made for purgacio*un* 120
Of' vryne and oure boþe þinges smale
Were eek' to knowe a femal from a male
And for non oþer cause what' seye ȝe no?
The exp*er*ience woot' it' is nouȝt' so 124
So þat' þe clerkes be not' with me wroþe
I seye þis þat' þey maked be for boþe
This is to seyn for office and for eese
Of' engendrynge þare we not' god displese 128
Why schulden men elles in here bokes sette
That' man schal yelde to his wijf' his dette
Now wher-wiþ scholde he paye his payement
yf' þat' he ne vsed his seely instrument 132

Than were þey maade vpon a creature
To purgie vryne and eek for engendure
But I seye nought þat euery wight is holde
That haþ such harneys as I to yow of tolde 136
To gon and vsen hem in engendrure
Thanne scholde men take of chastite no cure
Crist was a mayden and schapen as a man
And many a seynt syn þat þe world bygan 140
Yet lyued þey euere in parfyt chastite
I nel envye with no virginite
lete hem ete brede of pured whete seed
And late vs wyues ete barly breed 144
And yet with barly breed Mark telle can [1 *catchword: a leaf out; a sheet misplaced*]
Oure lord[1] [Ihesu refresshed / many a man [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 84, *back*]
in suche estate as god hath cleped vs
I wol perceiver / I am nought precious 148
in wiffhode wol I vse myn instrument
as frely as my maker / hath hit sent
yiff I be dangerous / god yeve me sorowe
myn housbonde shal it haue both eve *and* amorwe 152
whan that him list / com forth *and* pay his dette
an housbonde wol I haue / I wol not lette
which shal be / both my dettour *and* my thralle
and han his tribulacioun with-alle 156
vppon his flesshe / while that I am his wiff
I haue the power / durynge al my liff ¶ Ad Corinthios vij° vir sui corporis non habet potestatem set mulier &c
vppon his propre body / *and* not he
right thus the Appostel / tolde vn-to me 160
and bad oure housbondes / for to love vs welle
alle this sentence / me liketh euerydelle
Uppe sterte the pardoner / *and* that anoon
now dame quod he / bi god *and* bi seint Iohn 164
ye ben a noble prechoure / in this caas
I was abovte to wedde a wiff allaas
what shulde I bye it / on my flesshe so dere
yit had I lever wedde noon to yere 168

abyde q*uo*d she / my tale is not bigonne [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
nay thow shalt drynken / of another tonne
or that I go / shal sauour wers than ale [*leaf* 85]
and whan I haue tolde forth my tale 172
of tribulaciou*n* / that is in mariage
of which I am expert / in myn age
this is to seie / my-silff hath ben the whippe
than maistow chese / whether thow wilt sippe 176
of thilke tonne / that I shal abroche
be war of hit / or thow to nygh approche
for I shal telle ensamples / mo than ten
who so that wil not / be war bi other men 180
by him shulle other men corrected be
these same wordis / writeth Protholome ¶ Protholome
rede in his Almageste / *and* take it there
dame I wol pray yow / if youre wille were 184
seide this Pardoner / as ye bigan
telle forth youre tale / spare for no man
and teche vs yongemen / of youre practike
gladly q*uo*d she / sith it may yow like 188
but that I pray / to al this companye
if that I speke / after my fantesie
as taketh nought agreff / of that I seye
for myn entente / is not / but for to pleye. 192
NOw sirs than shal I telle yow my tale
as eu*er*e mot y drynke wyn or ale
I shal sey soth / tho housbondes that I hadde
as thre of hem were goode / *and* two were badde 196
the thre were goode men / riche *and* olde
vnneth mygh̃ten thei / the statute holde
in which thei were bounden vn-to me
ye wot wel what I meene of this p*ar*de 200
as god me helpe / I laugh whan I thynke
how pitously a nygh̃t / I made hem swynke
but bi my fay / I tolde of hit no store
thei hadde me yeve here londe / *and* here tresore 204

me nedede nought / do lenger diligence [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
to wynne here love / *and* do hem reu*er*ence
they loued me so wel / bi god above [*leaf* 85, *back*]
that I ne tolde no deynte / of here love 208
a wise woman wol besy hir / eu*er*e in oon
to gete hir love / ye there as she hath noon
but sith I hadde hem / holly in myn honde
and that thei hadde / yeve me al here londe 212
what shulde I take kepe hem for to please
but if it were my p*ro*fyte / *and* myn ease
I sette hem so a worke / bi my fay
that many a night / thei songen welaway 216
the Bac*ou*n was not fette for hem I trowe] [Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract stops*]
That some men haue in Essex*e* at Dunmowe [leaf 107; *for* 102]
I gouerned hem so wel after my lawe
That iche of hem ful blisful was and fawe / 220
To bringe me gay þinges fro þe feyre
They were ful glad whan I spak to hem faire [*This line is by another hand.*]
ffor god it woot I chidde hem spytously
Now herkneþ how I bar me p*ro*prely 224
ye wyse wyues þat can vnderstande
Thus schulde ye speke and bere hem wrong on hande
ffor half so boldely þer can no man
Swere and lye as a wo*m*man can 228
I seye not þis by wyues þat ben wise /
But it be whan þat þey hem mysavyse /
A wise wijf schal if þat sche can hire good
Bere him on hond þat þe kow is wood 232
And take witnesse of hir owne mayde /
Of hire assent but herkeþ how I sayde /
Sire olde kaynard is þis þin array
Why is my neyheboures wijf so gay 236
Sche is honoured ouer al wher sche goþ
I sitte at hom I haue no þrifty cloþ
What dostow at my neyhebores hous
Is sche so fair art þou so amerous 240

What' roune ȝe wiþ oure mayde benedicite
Sire olde lechour let' þy iapes be /
And if' I haue a gossibb or a freende
Wiþoute gilte ȝe chide as a feende 244
If' þat' I walke or pleye vnto his hous
þou comest' home as drunken as a mous
And prechest' on þi benche wiþ euel preef'
þou seist' to me it is a gret' meschief' 248
To wedde a pouer wo*m*man for costage
And if' þat' sche be riche of' gret' parage
þanne seistow þat' it' is a tormentrie /
To suffre hire pryde and hire malencolie / 252
And if' þat' sche be fair þou verray knaue /
Thow seist' þat' euery holour wol hir haue / [leaf 107, back]
Sche may no while in chastite abyde
That' is assayed vppon eche syde 256
Thou seist' some folk' desire vs for richesse
Some for oure schapp and some for oure fayrnesse
And some for sche can oþer synge or daunce
þus saistow wernard god ȝiue þe meschañce 260
Some for here hondes and here armes smale
Thus goþ al to þe deuel by þy tale/
þou seist' men may not' kepe a castel walle
It' may so longe assailed ben ouer alle / 264
And if' þat' sche be foule þou seist' þat' sche
Coueiteþ euery man þat' sche may see
ffor as a spaynel sche wol on him lepe
Til þat' sche fynde som man þat' wol hir chepe 268
Ne non so grey goos goþ þer in þe lake
As seist' þou þat' wol be wiþouten make
And seist' it is an hard þing' for to weelde
A wight' þat' noman wille his þankes helde 272
Thus seistow lorel whan þou gost' to bedde
And þat' no wys man needeþ for to wedde
And noman þat' entendiþ to þe heuene
Wiþ wilde þunder dent' and fyre leuene / 276

Mote þy wicked necke be to-broke
þou seist' þat' droppyng' houses and eek' smoke
And chydyng' wyues maken men to fle
Out' of' here owne houses a benedicite 280
What' eyleþ swich an olde man for to chyde
Thou seist' we wyues wille oure vices hyde
Til we be faste and þanne we wille hem schewe
Wel may þis be a prouerbe of' a schrewe 284
Thou seist' þat' Oxen assen hors and houndes
They ben assayed at' diuerse stoundes
Bacynes lauours or þat' men hem bye
Spoones stooles and swich housbondrye 288
And so ben cloþes pottes and oþer arrayes
But' of' wo*m*men aren maked non assayes [leaf 108, *for* 103]
Til þei ben wedded olde dotard schrewe
And seist' how þanne we wil oure vices schewe 292
Thou seist' also þat' it' displeses me
But' if' þou wille preyse my beaute
And but' þou poure alwey vpon my face
And clepe me faire dame in euery place 296
And but' þou make a feste on þat' ilke day
That' I was born and make me freische and gay
And but' þou do to my norys honour
And to my chambre wiþinne my bour 300
And to my fadres folk' and his allyes
Thus seist' þou olde barel ful of' lyes
And yit of' oure apprentys Iankyn
ffor his crispe heer schynynge so gold fyn 304
And for he squyeres me boþe vp and doun
yet' hastow þought' and fals suspecion̄
I wil him nought' þough þou were deed to morwe
But' telle me þis why hydest' þou with sorwe 308
Thy keyes of' þi cheste away fro me /
It' is my good as wel as þin p*ar*de
What' wenestow make an ydyot' of' oure dame /
Now by þat' lord þat' called is seint' Iame 312

þou schalt not boþe þough þou were wood
Be maister of my body and my good
That oon þou schalt forgo maugre þin eyȝen
What helpeþ it on me enquere and spyen 316
I trowe þoughh þou woldest loke me in þi cheste
þou scholdest seie wyf go where þe leste
Take youre disporte I wol not leue no tales
I knowe ȝow for a good wyf dame Alis 320
We loue no man þat takeþ keepe or charge
Where þat we go we wole be at oure large
Of alle men blessed mote he be
The wise astrologien dann ptholome 324
That seiþ þis p*rouer*be in his almageste
Of alle men his wisdam is hyeste [leaf 108, back]
That rekkeþ not who haþ þe world in hande
By þis p*rou*erbe þou schalt wel vnderstande 328
haue þou ynoughh what þar þe rekke or kare
how meryly þat oþer folkes fare
ffor certes olde dotard by youre leue
ye schulle haue queynte righht ynough at eue 332
he is to gret a nygard þat wol warne
A man to lighht a candel at his lantarne
he schal haue neuer þe lesse lighht/ parde
haue þou ynoughh þe þar not pleyne þe 336
þou seist also þat if þou make vs gay
Wiþ cloþing or with p*rec*ious array
That it is p*er*il of oure chastite
And ȝit with wordes þou most enforce me / 340
And seie þise wordes in þe apostels name
In habyt made with chastite and schame
ye wo*m*men schulle apparaille you q*uo*d he/
And nat in tressed heer and gay perre 344
As perle ne wiþ golde ne cloþes riche
After þi texte ne after þi rubriche
I wol not werke as mochil as a gnatt
þou saydest als þat I was like a catt 348

But who so wolde senge a cattes skyn
þanne wolde þe catt wel dwellen in his In
And if þe cattes skyn be slike and gay
Sche nel not dwelle in house half a day 352
But forþ sche wille or ony day be dawed
To schewe hire skyn and go a caterwrawed
þis is to say if I be gay sir schrewe
I wil renne out my borel for to schewe 356
Sire olde fool what helpeþ þe to spien
They þou prey argus with his þousand yhen argus habuit mille oculos.
To be my warde corps as he can best
In feiþ he schal not kepe me but if me lest 360
yet couþe I make his berd so mote I þee
þou seist eek þat þer ben þinges þree [leaf 109, *for* 104]
þe whiche þinges troublen al þis Erþe
And þat no wight may endure þe ferþe 364
O leue sire schrewe ih*es*u schorte þi lijf
yet prechest þou and seist an hateful wijf
y-rekned is for oon of þis meschances
Ben þer non oþer maner resemblances 368
þat ye may likene ȝoure parables to
But if a sely wijf be on of þo
And likenest wo*m*mannes loue to helle
To bareyne lond þer water may not dwelle 372
þou likenest it/ also to wilde fyre
The more it brenneth þe more it haþ desire
To consume eny þing þat brende wolde be
Thou seist þat right as wormes schende a tree 376
Right so a wyf destroyeþ hir housebonde
This knowen þey þat ben to wyues bonde
lordynges right þus ȝe han vnderstande
Bar I stifly my*n* olde housbondes on hande 380
þat þus þey seyden in here drunkenesse
And eek þat he hadde suspecioñ and Ielousnesse
On Iankyn and on my nefe also
O lord þe peyne I dede hem and þe woo 384

fful gilteles by goddes sweete pyne
ffor as an hors I couþe boþe byte and whyne
I couþe pleyne and I was in þe gilte
Or elles ofte tyme I hadde ben spilte 388
Who so þat' first' to mylle comþ fers' grynte
I pleyned first' so was oure werre stynte
þey were ful glade to excusen hem ful blyue /
Of' þing' which þei agilte neuer here lyue 392
Of' wenches wolde I beren hem on honde
Whan þat' for sike þey might' vnneþe stonde
yet' tykeled I his herte for þat he
Wende I hadde of' him so gret' chiertee 396
I swore þat' al my walkynge be nigh't
Was for to aspye wenches þat' he dighte [leaf 109, back]
vnder þat' colour hadde I many a myrþe
ffor alle such witte is ȝiue vs in oure birþe 400
Desceipte wepyng' spynnyng' god haþ ȝiue
To wo*m*man kyndely whil þat' þei may lyue ¶ ffallere flere nere dedit deus in muliere
And þus of' o þing' I auaunte me
At' þe ende I hadde þe beste in eche degre 404
By sleighte or force or by som maner þing'
As by continuel murmur and grucching'
Namely a bedde hadde þey meschaunce
Ther wolde I chide and do hem no plesaunce 408
I wolde no lenger in þe bedde abyde
If' þat' I felte his arm ouer my syde
Til he hadde made his raunsom vnto me
Thanne wolde I suffre him do his nycete 412
And þerfore eu*er*y man þis tale I telle
Wy*n*ne who so may al are for to selle
Wiþ empty hande men may non haukes lure
ffor wynnyng' wolde I al his lust' endure 416
And make me a feyned appetyt'
And ȝit' in bakon̄ hadde I neuer delit/
That' maked me þat' euer I wolde him chyde
ffor þough þe pope hadde sete him besyde 420

I wolde nouȝt spare him at his oughne bord
ffor by my trouþe I quitte him word for word
As helpe me verrey god omnipotent
þough I right now schulde make my testament 424
I ne owe him a word þat it nys quitte
I brought it so aboute by my witte
That he muste ȝiue it vp as for þe beste /
Or elles hadde we neuere ben in reste 428
ffor þough he loked as a leoun
ȝet scholde he faile of his conclusioñ
Thenne wolde I seye now goode leef take keepe /
how mekely lokeþ wilkyn oure scheepe 432
Com ner my spouse lat me ba þi cheeke
ȝe schulle be al pacient and meeke [leaf 110, *for* 105]
And han a sweete spiced conscience /
Syn ȝe so preche of Iobis pacience 436
Suffreþ alwey syn ȝe so wel can p*re*che
And but ȝe do certein we schul ȝou teche
That it is fair to haue a wyf in pees
On of vs moot bowen doutelees 440
And siþþe a man is more resonable
Than woman is sire ȝe moste be suffrable /
What eyleþ ȝou to grucche þus and grone
Is it for ȝe wolde haue my queynte allone 444
Whi tak it al / lo haue it euery del
Petir I schrewe ȝou but ȝe loue me wel
ffor If I wolde selle my bele chose
I couþe walke as freissche as a rose 448
But I wil kepe it for ȝour owne toþ
ȝe be to blame by god I seye ȝou soþ
Suche maner wordes hadde we on honde
Now wol I speke of my ferþe housbonde / 452
¶ My ferþe housbond was a reuelour
This is to seye he hadde a p*ar*amour
And I was yong and ful of Ragerie
Styborne and strong and ioly as a pye 456

lord how couþe I daunce to an harpe smale /
And synge ywys as eny nyghtyngale /
Whan I hadde dronke a draughte of sweete wyn
Meteling þe foule cherle þe swyn 460
That with a staf byraft his wif hir lyf
ffor sche drank wyn þough I hadde ben his wijf
Ne schulde he nought han daunted me fro drynke
And after wyn on venus most I þinke 464
ffor also syker as colde engendreþ hayl
A likerous mouþ moste han a likerous tail
In wo*m*man violent is no defence
This knowen lecchoures by exp*e*rience 468
But lord crist whan þat it remembreþ me /
vpon my ȝouþe and my Iolyte [leaf 110, back]
It tykeleþ me about my*n* herte roote
vnto þis day it doþ my*n* herte boote 472
þat I haue had my world as in my tyme
But age allas þat al wol envenyme
haþ me byraft my beaute and my piþ
lat go far wel þe deuel go þ*er*-wiþ 476
The flour is gon þer is nomore to telle
The bren as I best can now moot I selle
But ȝet to be right mery wol I fonde /
Now forþ to telle of my ferþe housbonde 480
I seye I hatte in herte gret despyt
That he of eny oþer hadde delyt
But he was quyte by god and by sent Iose
I made him of þe same woode a crose 484
Not of my body in no foul manere
But certeinly I made folk such cheere
That in his owne grece I made him frye
ffor angery and for verray Ialousie / 488
By god in erþe I was his purgatorie
ffor which I hope his soule be in glorie /
ffor god it wot he sat ful ofte and song
Whan þat his scho ful bitterly him wrong 492

ffor þer was non sauf' god and he þat' wiste
In many wise where I him twiste
he deyed whan I cam fro Ierusalem
And liþ y-graue vnder þe Roode beem 496
Al nys his tombe not' so curious
As was þe sepulcre of' him Darius
Which þat' appelles wroughten subtilly
It' nys but' waste to burye him preciously 500
lat' him far wel god ȝiue his soule reste
he is now in his graue and in his cheste
¶ Now of' my fyfþe housbonde wil I telle
God late neuer his soule come in helle / 504
And ȝit' was he to me þe moste schrewe /
That' feele I on my ribbes al by rewe [leaf 111, *for* 106]
And euere schal vnto myn endyng' day
But' in a bed he was so freissh̄ and gay 508
And þer-wiþ-al so wel couþe he me glose /
Whan þat' he wolde han my bele chose /
þat' þough he hadde me bete on euery boon
he couþe wynne agayn my loue anon 512
I trowe I loued him þe bet' for he
Was of' his loue daungerous to me
We wymmen han if' þat' I schal not' lye
In þis manere a queinte fantasye 516
Wayte what' þing we may nought' lightly haue
Ther-after wole we crye alday and craue /
fforbede vs þing' and þat' desyren we
Prees on vs faste and þanne wil we flee / 520
Wiþ daunger outen we alle oure chaffare
Gret' prees at' market' makeþ deere ware /
And to gret' cheep is holde / at' litel pris
This knoweþ euery womman þat' is wys 524
My .v^e^ housbonde god his soule blesse
Which þat' I took' for loue and no richesse /
he som tyme was a clerk' of' Oxenforde
And hadde left' scole and wente at' hom to borde 528

Wiþ my gossybb dwellyng' in oure toun
God haue hire soule hir name was alisoun
Sche knew myn herte and al my priuyte /
Bettre þan oure parissche prest' so mote I þee / 532
To hire bywreyed I my counseil al
ffor hadde myn housbonde pyssed on a wal
Or don a þing' þat' schulde haue cost' his lyf'
To hire and to anoþer worþy wyf' 536
And to my neece which I loue wel
I wolde han told his counseiH euerydeH
And so I dede ful ofte god it' woot'
That' made his face often reed and hoot' 540
ffor verray schame and blamed himself' for he
hadde told to me so gret' a pryuyte [leaf 111, back]
And so it' felle þat' ones in a lente
So ofte tyme vnto my gossib wente / 544
ffor euer ȝit I loued to be gay
And for to walke in march̄ aueril and may
ffrom hous to hous to herkne sondry tales
That' Iankyn clerk' and my gossibb dame alis 548
And I my self' in to þe feldes wente
myn housbond was at' londoñ al þat' lente
I hadde þe bettre leysir for to pleye
And for to see and eek' for to be seye 552
Of' lusty folk' what' wist' I wher my grace
Was schapen for to be or in what' place
þerfore made I my visitacioñs
To vigilies and to processioñs 556
To prechyng' eek' and to þis pilgrimages
To pleyes of' myracles and of' mariages
And wered vpon my gaye skarlet' gytes
This wormes ne þise moþþes ne þise mytes 560
vppon my peril frete hem neuer a del
And wostow why for þey were vsed wel
¶ Now wol I tellen forþ what' happed me
I seye þat' in þe feeldes walked we 564

Til trewely we hadde such dalyance
þis clerk and I þat of my purueiaunce
I spak to him and seyde how þat he
If I were wydow schulde wedde me 568
ffor certeynly I seye for no bobaunce /
þat was I neuer ȝit wiþoute purueance
Of mariage ne of oþer þinges eeke
I holde a mouses witte nat worþ a leek 572
þat haþ but oon hole for to stirten to
And if þat faile þan is al y-do
[I bar him on honde / he had enchaunted me [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *No other Oxford MS has these lines.*—G. Parker.]
my dame taught̄e me / that subtilte
and eke I seide / I mette of him al nigh̄t
he wolde haue shamed me / as I lay vprigh̄t
and al my bed was ful / of verry blood
but yit I hope / that ye shul do me good 580
for blood bitokeneth̄ gold / as me was taught̄e
and al was fals / for I dremed righ̄t naught̄e
but as I folwed ay / my dames lore
als wel of that / as of other thinges more] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *extract stops*]
But now sire lat me see what I schal seyn
A ha . by god I haue my tale agayn
Whan þat my ferþe housbonde was on bere
I wepe algate and made sory chere [leaf 112, *for* 107] 588
As wyues mooten for it is vsage /
And with my keu*er*cheeff couered my visage
But for þat I was purueyed of a make /
I weep but smale and þat I vndertake 592
To chirche was my*n* housbond y-born on morwe
With neghebours þat for him made sorwe
And Iankyn oure clerk was on of þo
As help me god whan þat I seih him go 596
After þe beere me þought̄ he hadde a paire
Of legges and of feet so cleene and faire
That al myn herte I yaf vnto his holde
he was I trowe twenty wynt*er* olde 600

And I was fourty if' I schal seye soþ
But' yet' I hadde alwey a coltes toþ
Gat' toþed I was and þat bycam me wel
I hadde þe printe of' seint' venus sel 604
As help me god I was a lusty oon
And fair and riche and ȝong' and wel bygon
And trewely as myn housbond tolde me
I hadde þe beste queynte þat/ mighte be 608
[for certis I am al fully Venerian
in feling / *and* myn herte is Marcian
Venus me yaff my lust / my likerousnes
and Mars yaff me / my sturdy hardynes] 612

[MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *Only this Oxf. MS has these lines. Barlow* 20 *omits ll.* 605-8 *too.*—G. P.]

Myn ascendent' was Taur and Mars þerinne
Allas allas þat' euer loue was synne /
I folwed ay myn inclinacioñ
By vertue of' my constellacioñ · 616
That' made me I couþe not' wiþdrawe
My chambre of' venus from a good felawe
[yit haue I Mars is marke / vppon my face
and also in another prevy place
for god so wis be / my sauacioun
I loued neuere / bi no discressioun
but euere folwed / myn appetite
al were he long / shorte / blak or white 624
I toke no kepe / so that he liked me
how pore he was / ne eke of what degre]
What' schulde I seye but' at' þe monþes ende
This Ioly clerk' Iankyn þat' was so heende / 628
haþ wedded me with̃ gret' solempnite
And to him ȝaf' I al þe lond and fee /
That' euere was me ȝiuen þer byfore
But' afterward repentede me ful sore 632
he nolde suffre no þing' of' my lest'
By god he smot' me onys on þe lest'
ffor þat' I rente out' of' his book' a leef'
That' of' þat' strook' my eeren woxen deef' [leaf 112, back] 636

[MS Arch. Seld. B. 14. *Laud* 600 *also has these lines,* 619—226, *but no other Oxford MS has them.*—G. P.]

¶ Stiborne I was as is a leonesse /
And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse /
And walke I wolde as I hadde don biforn
ffrom hous to hous al þoughh he hadde it sworn 640
ffor wiþ ful often tyme he wolde preche
And me olde romañce gestes teche
how he simplicius Gallus lefte his wijf
And hire forsook for terme of his lijf 644
Not but for openhede he hir say
Lokyng out at his dore on a day
Anoþer Romayn tolde he me by name
That for his wyf was at a Somer game / 648
Wiþoute his wytyng he forsook hire eeke
And þanne wolde he vpon his bible seeke
That ilke prouerbe of ecclesiaste
Wher he comaūndeþ and forbedeþ faste 652
Man schal not suffre his wyf to roule aboute
þan wolde he seye right þus wiþouten doute
Who so þat buldeth his hous al of salwes *nota bene*
And prikeþ his blynde hors ouer þe falwes 656
And suffreþ his wijf go for to seeken halwes
Is worþy for to be hanged on þe galwes
But al for noughht I sette nat an hawe
Of his prouerbes ne of his olde lawe 660
Ne I wolde not of him corrected be /
I hate him þat my vice telleþ me
And so don mo god woot of vs þan I
This made him with me wood al outerly 664
I nolde not forbere him in no caas
Now wil I seie ȝou soþ by seint Thomas
Why þat I rent out of his book a leef
ffor which he smot me þat I was deef 668
he hadde a book þat gladly night and day
ffor his disporte he wolde rede alway
he clepede valery and Theofraste
At which book he lowh alwey ful faste [leaf 113, *for* 108] 672

And eek þer was som tyme a clerk in Rome /
A Cardinal þat hight seint Ierome
That made a book azein Iouynian
In which book eeke þer was Terculan 676
Crisippus Trocula and helowys
That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys
And eek þe parables of Salomon
Ovides art and bokes many oon 680
And alle þise were bounde in oo volume
And euery night and day was his custume
Whan he hadde leysyr and vacacioun
ffrom oþer worldly occupacioñ 684
To reden in þis book of wikked wyues
he knew of hem mo legendes and lyues
Than ben of goode wyues in þe bible /
ffor trusteþ wel it is an impossible 688
That ony clerk wole speken good of wyues
But if it be of holy seintes lyues
Ne of non oþer wommen neuer þe mo
Who peynted þe lyoun tel me who 692
By god if wommen hadden writen stories
As clerkes han wiþinne here oratories
They wolde haue writen of men more wickednesse
Than alle þe marke of adam may redresse 696
The children of mercurie and venus
Ben in here werkynge contrarious
Mercurie loueþ wisdam and science /
And venus loueþ ryot and dispence / 700
And for here diuerse disposicioñ
Eche falleþ in oþres exaltacioñ
As þus god wot mercurie is desolat
In Piscis. where venus is exaltat 704
And venus falleþ þer mercurie is reised
Ther-fore no womman of no man is preysed
The clerk whan he is olde and may not do
To Venus werk nought worþ his olde scho [leaf 113, back]

Than sitte he doun and writ' in his dotage /
That' wo*m*men con not' keepe here mariage
But' now to purpos why I tolde þe
That' I was beten for a book' p*ar*dee 712
Vppon a nigħt' Iankyn þat' was oure syr*e*
Redde on his book' as he sat' by þe fyre
Of' Eua first' þat' for hire wickednesse
Was al mankynde brought' to wrecchednesse 716
[for which Ih*e*su crist / him silff was sleyne [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 92, *back*]
that bought vs with his herte blood ageyne [*Laud MS* 739 *omits* 716—720.]
lo here expresse of recorde / may ye fynde
that woman was the loos / of al mankynde] 720
Tho redde he me how Sampson lost' his heris
Slepyng' his le*m*man kit' it' wiþ hir scheris
Thurgh which tresoñ lost' he boþe his eyen
Tho redde he me if' þat' I schal not' lyen 724
Of' ercules and of' his deyanire /
That' caused him to sette himself' a fyre
No þing' for-gat' he þe penance and woo
That' Socrates hadde with his wyues tuo 728
how þat' ancipa caste pisse on his heed
This seely man sat' stille as he were deed
he wyped his heed no more durste he seyn
But' or þat' þundir stynte comeþ a reyn 732
Of' Phasipha þat' was þe queen of' Grete /
ffor schrewednesse him þought' þe tale swete
ffy spek' nomore it is a grisly þing'
Of' hire horrible lust' and hire likyng' 736
Of' Clitermistra for hire leccherie
That' falsly made hir housbonde for to dye
he redde it' wiþ wel good deuocioñ
he tolde me for what' occasioñ 740
Amphiorax at' Thebes lost' his lyf'
Myn housbond had a legend of' his wijf'
Eriphilem þat' for an ouche of' golde
haþ pryuyly vnto þe Grekes tolde 744

Wher þat hir housbond hid him in a place
ffor which he hadde at Thebes sory *grace*
Of lyma tolde he me and of lucye 747
They boþe made here housbondes for to dye [leaf 114, *for* 109]
That on for loue þat oþer was for hate
lyma hire housebonde on euen late
Enpoysoned hadde for sche was his foo
Lucia likerous loued hir housbonde so 752
That for he scholde vppon hir alwey þinke
Sche yaf him such a loue maner drynke
That he was deed er it was by þe morwe
And þus algates housbondes han sorwe 756
Than tolde he me how oon latumyus
Compleigned to his felaw arius
That in his gardyn growed such a tree
On which he seyde þat his wyues þre 760
hanged hemselue for hertes dispitous
O leeue broþer quod þis arious
ȝif me a plante of þat blisful tree
And in my gardyn planted schal it be/ 764
Of later date of wyues haþ he redde
That han slayne here housbondes in þe bedde
And leet hir lecchour dight hir al þe night
Whan þat þe corps lay in þe floor vpright 768
And some han dryuen nayles in here brayn
Whil þat þey sleepe and þus þey han hem slayn
Some han ȝiuen poyson in here drynke
He spak more harme þan herte may beþynke 772
And þer-wiþ-al he knew of mo *prouerbes*
þan in þis worlde þer growen gresse or herbes ¶ Solo melius *est* *habitare*
Bet is q*uod* he þin habitacioñ
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoñ 776
Than with a wo*m*man vsyng for to chyde
Bet is q*uod* he heihe in þe roof abyde
Than wiþ an angry wyf doun in an hous
They ben so wicked and cont*ra*rious 780

þey hateþ þat here housbondes loueþ ay
he seyde a wo*m*man cast hir schame away
Whan sche cast of hir smok and for*þer*mo
A fair w*om*man but sche be chast also [leaf 114, back] 784
Is lyk a goldryng on a sowes nose
Who wolde wene or wolde suppose
þe woo þat in my*n* herte was and pyne
And whan I saugh he wolde neuer fyne 788
To reden on þis cursed book al night
Al sodeinly þre leues haue I plight
Out of his book right as he red and eeke
I with my fest so took him on þe cheeke 792
þat in oure fire he fille bakward adoun
And he vpstirte as doþ a wood leoun
And with his fest he smot me on þe heed
þat in þe floor I lay as I were deed 796
And whan he saugh how stille þat I lay
he was agast and wolde han fledde away
Til atte laste out of my swowe I brayde
O hast þou slayn me false þeef I sayde 800
And for my lond þus hastow moerdred me /
Or I be deed ȝit wol I kisse þe
And neer he come and kneled faire adoun
And seyde deere suster alis*oun* 804
As help me god I schal þe neuer smyte
þat I haue doon it is þiself to wyte
ffor ȝiue it me and þat I þe beseke /
And ȝit eftsones I hitte him on þe cheeke / 808
And seyde þeef þus mochel am I wreke
Now wil I dye I may no lenger speke
But at þe laste / wiþ mochel care and woo
We felle acorded by vs seluen tuo 812
he ȝaf me al þe brydel in myn hond
To haue þe gou*er*nance of hous and lond
And of his tunge and of his hand also/
And made him brenne his book anon right þo 816

And whan þat I hadde geten vnto me
By maistrie al þe souerainte
þan he seyde myn owne trewe wyf [leaf 114, back, at bottom of the page]
Do as þou list þe te*r*me of alle þy lif / [leaf 101 b. *for* 110]
kepe þin hono*ur* and keep eek myn estate /
After þat day we hadde neuer debate /
God help me so I was to him as kynde
As eny wijf from Denmark in to ynde 824
And al so trewe and so was he to me /
I pray to god þat sitte in mageste
So blisse his soule for his mercy deere
Now wol I telle my tale if ȝe wol heere 828

¶ Here endeþ þe p*r*ologe of þe gode wif of Baþe

[*The Wrangle between the Summoner and Friar.*]

The frere lowh whan he haþ herd al þis
Now dame q*uod* he so haue I ioye or blis
This is a long preamble of a tale
And whan þis somnour herde þe freere gale / 832
Lo q*uod* þe somno*ur* goddes armes tuo
A freere wille entremette him eu*er*mo
lo goode men a flye and eek a freere
Wille falle in euery dissche and eek / matiere / 836
What spekest þou of preambulacioñ
What amble or trotte or pees or go sit doun
Thou lettest / oure disport in þis manere /
ȝe woltow so þou sompno*ur* q*uod* þe ffrere / 840
Now by my fay I schal er þat I go
Telle of a Somnour such a tale or tuo
That alle þe folk schulle laughen in þis place
Now elles frere I beschrewe þy face 844
Quod þis somnour and I byschrewe me /
But if I telle þe tales tuo or þre
Of freres or I come to Sydyngborne
þat I schal make þin herte for to morne 848

ffor wel I wot þy pacience is gon
Oure hoste cryde pees and þat anon
And seyde lat þe wo*m*man telle hir tale /
Ye faren as folk þat dronken ben of ale 852
Do dame telle forþ youre tale and þat is beste
Al redy sire q*uod* sche right as yow leste
[[1]If I have licens o]f þis worþi frere [[1] *MS cut away. Cf* 101b, *bk*]
[[1]Yis dame telle] forþ þi tale I wol here 856

[[1] Here bigynneth] þe goode wyues tale of[t] bathe [on lf 101, bk]
[[1] MS cut away.]

IN olde dayes of[t] þe king[t] arthour
[O]f[t] which þat[t] britons speken gret[t] honour
[A]l was þis land fulfild of[t] fayerie
[T]he elfe queen with hire ioly compaignie 860
[D]aunced wiþouten in many a greene meede
[T]his was þe olde opynion̄ as I rede
[I speke of many] hundred ȝeer ago
[But] now can noman see non elues moo 864
[For] þe grete charite and þe preyeres
[Of] lymytoures and oþre pouere freeres
[T]hat[t] serchen euery land and euery streem
[A]s þikke as motes in þe sonne beem 868
Blissynge halles chambres boures
[C]itees burghes castels hihe toures
[T]hropes bernes schipenes dayeries
This makeþ þat[t] þer ben no fayeries 872
ffor þer as wont[t] to walke was an elf[t]
Ther walkeþ now þe lymytour himself[t]
In vndermeles and in morwenynges
And seiþ his matyns and his holy þinges 876
As he goþ in his lymytacioun
Wommen may go now saufly vp and doun
In euery busch̄ or vnder euery tree
þer is non oþer Incubus but[t] he 880
And he wol do hem but[t] dishonour
And so felle it / þat[t] þis king[t] arthour
hadde in his hous a lusty bacheler
þat[t] on a day cam rydyng[t] fro ryuer 884

And happed alone as sche was born
he saugh a mayden walkyng him biforn
Of which mayde maugre hire heed
By verray force he refte hir maydenhed 888
ffor which opp*re*ssioñ was such clamour
And swich pursute vnto þe king artour [leaf 102, *for* 111]
That dampned was þis knight for to be deed
By cours of lawe and scholde haue lost his heed 892
P*er*auenture such was þe statute þo
But þat þe queene and oþer ladyes mo
So longe preyede þe king of grace /
Til he his lijf him g*ra*unted in þe place 896
And yaf him to þe queen al at hire wille
To cheese wheþer sche wolde him saue or spille
The queen þankeþ þe king with all*e* hire mighť
And after þis þus spak sche to þe knight 900
Whan þat sche seigh hir tyme on a day
þou stondest yet q*uod* sche in such aray
þat of þi lijf yet hast þou no suerte
I g*ra*unte þe lijf if þou canst telle me 904
What þing is it/ þat wo*m*men most desiren
Be war and keep þi neeke bon from yren
And if þou canst nought telle it me anon
ȝit/ wol I ȝiue þe leue for to gon 908
A twelf monþe and a day to seeke and lere
An answere sufficant/ in þis matiere
And seurte wil I han or þat þ*o*u pace
Thy body for to yelden in þis place 912
Wo was þis knight and sorufully he sikeþ
But what he may not do al as him likeþ
And at þe laste he chese him for to wende /
And come aȝein right at þe yeres ende / 916
With swich answere as god wolde him purueye /
And takeþ his leue and wendeþ forþ his weye
he seekeþ euery hous and euery place /
Wher as he hopeþ for to fynde grace 920

To lerne what þing wo*m*men louen most
But he now couþe arryuen in no coost
Wher as he mighte fynde in þis matere /
Tuo creatures acordyng in feere 924
Some seyden wo*m*men loue best richesse
Some seyde honour some seyden Iolynesse / [leaf 102, back]
Some riche array some seyden lust a bedde /
And ofte time to be wydewe and wedde / 928
Some seyden þat we be most yesed
Whan þat we ben y-flatered and y-plesed
he goþ ful neigh þe soþe I wol nat lye
A man schal wynne vs best wiþ flaterie 932
And with attendaunce and wiþ besynesse
Ben we y-lymed boþe more and lesse /
And some men sein how þat we louen best
ffor to be fre and do right as vs lest 936
And þat noman / repreue vs of oure vice
But seye þat we be wyse and noþing nyce
ffor trewely þer nys non of vs alle /
If eny wight wol clawe vs on þe galle / 940
þat we nyl loke or he seiþ vs soþ
Assay and he schal fynde it þat he doþ
ffor be we neuer so vicious wiþinne
We wil be holden wys and clene of synne 944
And some men sein þat gret delyt haue we
ffor to be holden stable and ek secre
And in oo purpos stedefastly to dwelle
And not bewreye þing þat men vs telle 948
But þat tale is not worþ a rake stele
Parde we wo*m*men konnen noþing hele
Witnesse on Myda wil ȝe heere þe tale /
Ovide amonges oþer þinges smale 952
Setthe myda hadde vnder his longe heris
Growynge vp his heed two assis eeres
þe whiche vice he hidde as he best might
fful sotilly from euery mannes sight 956

þat saf his wijf þer wist of it no mo
he loued hire most and trusted to hire also
he preyde hire most þat vnto no creature
Sche scholde not tellen of his disfigure 960
Sche swor him nay for al þis world to wynne /
Sche wolde do þat vylanye or þat synne [leaf 103, *for* 112]
To make hire housbonde han so foul a name
ffor reproeuyng of him and foule schame 964
But naþeles hir þoughte þat sche dyde
That sche so longe scholde a counseil hyde
hir þought it sat so sore aboute hir herte
That needely som word hir most asterte 968
And siþþe sche dorste tellen it no man
Doun to a mareys faste sche ran
Til sche cam þer hir herte was a fyre
And as a bytore bumliþ in þe myre 972
Sche leyde hire mouþ vnto þe water doun
Bewreye me nought þou water with þy soun
Quod sche to þe I telle it and nomo
Myn housebonde haþ longe asses eeres tuo 976
Now is myn herte al hool now it is oute
I might no lenger kepe it out of doute
here may ȝe see þough we a tyme abyde
Yet out it moot we mowe no counseil hyde 980
The remenant of þe tale if ye wol heere
Redeþ Ovyde and ȝe may it leere
This knight of which my tale is specially
Whan þat he saugh he mighte nought come *þer*by 984
þis is to seye what wo*mm*en louen most
Wiþinne his herte sorwful was þe gost
But home he goþ he mighte nought soiourne
þe day was come þat homward most he tourne 988
And in his way it happed him to ryde
In alle his care vnder a forest syde
Wher he saugh on one daunce go
Of ladyes xxiiij. and ȝit mo 992

Toward þe daunce he drowe him yerne
In hope þat som wisdam schulde he lerne
But certeinly or he cam fully þere /
Vanyssched was þe daunce he nyste not where / 996
No creature saugh he þat bar lyf
Saue in þe grene he saugh sittyng a wijf [leaf 103, back]
A foulere wight þer may non deuyse
Agayn þe knight þe olde wijf gan arise 1000
And seyde sire knight here forþ ne liþ no wey
Telle me what þat ȝe seken by ȝoure fey
Perauenture it may þe bettre be /
This olde folk konne mochel þing quod sche / 1004
my leeue mooder q*uod* þis knight certeyn
I am but ded but if þat I can seyn
What þing it is þat wo*m*men most desire
Cowde ȝe me wisse I wolde wel quyte youre hyre 1008
Plight me þi trouþe here in myn hand q*uod* sche
The nexte þing þat I require þe
Thou schalt it do if it lye in þy might
And I wil telle it ȝou or it be night 1012
haue here my trouþe q*uod* þe knight I g*ra*unte
Than q*uod* sche I may me wel auaunte
Thy lyf is sauf for I wol stonde þer by
vpon my lijf þe queen wole seye as I 1016
lat se which is þe proudest of hem all*e*
That wereþ on a kerchef or a calle
þat dar say nay of þat I schal ȝou teche
lat vs go forþ wiþoute lenger speche 1020
Tho rowned sche a pystel in his eere
And bad him to be glad and haue no feere
Whan þey be comen to þe court þis knight
Seyde he hadde holde his day as he hadde hight 1024
And redy was his answere as he sayde
fful many a noble wijf and many a mayde
And many a wydowe for þat þey ben wyse /
The queen hir seluen sittyng as Iustyse 1028

Assembled ben his answer for to heere
And afterward þis knigħt was bode appeere
And þat þe knigħt schal telle in audience
To euery wigħt comanded was scilence 1032
What þing þat worldly wo*m*men louen meest
This knigħt ne stood nat stille as doþ a beest [leaf 104, *for* 113]
But to his questioñ anon answerde /
With manly vois þat al þe court/ it herde 1036
My liege lady gene*r*ally q*uod* he /
Wo*m*man desireþ to haue souerayntе
As wel ouer hir housbonde and hire loue
And for to be in maystrie him aboue 1040
þis is ȝoure most desyr þoughħ ȝe me kille
Doþ as you list I am heer at your wille
In al þe court ne was þer wijf ne mayde
Ne wydewe þat contraried þat he sayde 1044
But seyden he was worþy han his lijf
And wiþ þat word vp sterte þat olde wijf
Which þat þe knight saugh sittyng on þe grene
Mercy q*uod* sche my souerayn lady queene/ 1048
Or þat youre court departe do me rigħt
I taughte þis answere vnto þis knigħt
ffor which he plighte me his treuþe þere
The firste þing I wolde of him requere 1052
he wolde it do if it lay in his migħt
Byfore þe court þan preye I þe sire knigħt
Quod sche þat þou me take vnto þi wijf
ffor wel þou wost þat I haue kept þy lijf 1056
If I seye fals sey nay vpon þy fey
This knight answerde allas and weylowey
I wot right wel þat such was my biheste /
ffor goddes loue chese a newe requeste/ 1060
Tak al my good and lat my body go
Nay þan q*uod* sche I schrewe vs boþe tuo
ffor þough þat I be foule and olde and poure
I nolde for al þe metal ne for oure 1064

þat vnder erþe is graue or liþ aboue
But if þat I þy wyf were and þi loue
My loue q*uod* he nay my dampnacioñ
Allas þat eny of my nacioñ 1068
Scholde euere so foule y-disp*ar*aged be
But al for nought þe ende is þis þat he [leaf 104, back]
Constreyned was he nedes moste hire wedde
And takeþ þis olde wijf and goþ to bedde 1072
Now wolden some men seyn p*er*auenture
That for my necgligence I do no cure
To telle ȝou þe Ioye and þe array
That at þe feste was þat ilke day 1076
To which þing schortly answer*e* I schal
I seye þer was no ioye ne feste at al
þer nas but heuynesse and mochil sorwe
ffor priuely he wedded hire on a morwe 1080
And al day after hidde him as an owle /
So wo was him his wijf loked so foule
Gret was þe sorwe þe knight hadde in his þought
Whan he was with his wyf a bedde brought 1084
he walweþ and torneþ to and fro
his olde wijf lay smylyng eu*er*emo
And seide O dere housbonde o b*en*edicite
ffareþ euery knight þus with his wijf as ȝe 1088
Is þis þe lawe of king arthures hous
Is euery knight of his loue þus daungerous
I am ȝour owne loue and eek ȝoure wijf
I am sche which þat saued haþ ȝoure lijf 1092
And certes ȝit dede I ȝou neuer vnright
Why fare ȝe þus wiþ me þe ferste night
ȝe faren like a man þat hadde lost his wit
ffy what is my gilt for godes loue tel it 1096
And it schal ben amended if I may
Amended q*uo*d þis knight nay nay
That wil nat ben amended neueremo
þou art so loþly and so olde also 1100

And þer-to comen of so lowh a kynde
That litel wonder is þough I walwe & wynde
So wolde god my*n* herte wolde breste
Is þis q*uod* sche þe cause of 3oure vnreste? 1104
3e · certeinly q*uod* he no wonder is
Now sire q*uod* sche I couþe amende al þis [leaf 105, *for* 114]
If þat me liste or it were dayes þre
So wel 3e mighte bere 3ou vnto me 1108
¶ But for 3e speken of such gentilesse ¶ No*ta* bene de Nobilitate
As is descended out of alle richesse /
þat þerfore schulden 3e be gentil men
Such erregance nys nat worþ an hen 1112
lo who þat most is v*er*tuous alway
Preuy and aperte and most endeþ ay
To do þe gentil dedes þat he can
And take him for þe grettest gentil man 1116
Crist wole we clayme of him oure gentilnesse
Nat of oure eldres for here olde richesse
ffor þough þey 3eue vs alle here heritage
ffor which we clayme to be of heigh parage 1120
3et may þey not bequeþe for no þing
To non of vs here vertuous lyuyng
That made hem gentil men y-called be
And bad vs folwen hem in such degre 1124
Wel can þe wise poete of fflorence
That hightе dante speke in þis sentence
Lo in swich maner ryme is dauntes tale
fful seelde vp riseþ by his branches smale 1128
Prowesse of man for god of his prowesse /
Wil þat of him we clayme oure gentilnesse
ffor of oure eldres may we noþing clayme
But temp*er*el þing þat we may hurte and mayme 1132
Ek euery wight wot þis as wel as I
If gentilesse were plaunted naturelly
Vnto a certein linage doun þe lyne
Pryue and aperte þanne wolde þey neuer fyne 1136

To don of gentilesse þe faire office
þey mighten do no vylanye ne vice
Tak fyre and bere it in þe derkest hous
Bitwixe þis and þe mount of Caucasous 1140
And lat men schette þe dores and go þenne
3et wol þe fyr as faire lye and brenne [leaf 105, back]
As þoughh a þousand men mighht it beholde
his office naturel ay wol it holde / 1144
vp p*er*il of lyf til þat it dye /
here may 3e se wel how þat genterie /
Is not annexed to possessioñ
Siþþe folk do nat here op*er*acioñ 1148
alwey as doþ þe fir lo in his kinde
ffor god it wot men may ful often fynde
A lordes sone do schame and vilanye
And he þat wol haue pris of his gentrie 1152
ffor he was boren of a gentil hous
And hadde his eldres noble and vertuous
And nyl himseluen do no gentil dedes
Ne folwe his gentil ancestr*e* þat ded is 1156
he nys nat gentil be he duk or eerle
ffor vyleyns synful dedes make a cheerle
ffor gentilnesse nys but reneute
Of þin ancestres for here beaute 1160
Which is a strong þing for þi p*er*sone
The gentilesse comeþ fro god allone
Thanne comeþ oure v*er*ray gentilesse of g*ra*ce
It was noþing byqueþe vs wiþ oure place / 1164
þinkeþ how noble as seiþ valerius
Was þilke Tulli*us* hostilius
That out of pouert ros to heighh noblesse
Redeþ Senec/ and redeþ eek Boesse / 1168
þer schulde 3e seen expres þat it no dredis
That he is gentil þat doþ gentil dedis
And þ*er*fore deere housebonde I þus conclude
Al were it þat myn ancestres were rude 1172

ȝet' may þat' heye god and so hope I
Graunte me grace to lyue v*er*tuously
Thanne am I gentil whan þat' I begynne
To lyuen v*er*tuously and weyuen synne 1176
And þer as ye of' pouert' me repreue
The hihe god on whom þat' we bileeue [leaf 106, *for* 115*a*]
In wilful pouert' chese to leese his lijf' Nota de paupertate
And certes eu*er*y man and mayde and wijf' 1180
May vnderstonde ih*es*u heuen king'
Ne wolde not' chese a vicious lyuyng'
Glad pouert' is an honest' þing' certeyn
þis wille Senec'/ and oþer clerkes sein 1184
Who so þat' holt' him payed of' his pouert'
I holde him riche al hadde he nought' cert'
he þat' coueyteþ is a pouere wigħt'
ffor he wolde han þat' nys nat' in his migħt 1188
But' he þat' nought' haþ ne coueyteþ to haue
Is riche al þougħ men holde him but a knaue
Verray pouert' is synne p*ro*prely
Iuuenal seiþ of' pouert' myrily 1192
The pouere man whan he goþ by þe way
Bifore þe þeues he may synge and play
Pouert' is hatel good and as I gesse /
A ful gret' brynger out' of' busynesse 1196
A gret' amender eek' of' Sapience
To him þat' lackeþ it in pacience
Pouert' is þis al þougħ it' seme alenge
Possessioñ þat' no wigħt' wol chalenge 1200
Pouert' ful often whan a man is lowe
Makeþ his god and eek' himself' to knowe
Pouert' a spectacle is as þinkeþ me
þurgh which he may his v*er*ray freendes se 1204
And þerfore syn þat' I you nought' greue
Of' my pouerte nomore me repreue
Now sire of' eelde ȝe reproeue me
And certes sire þougħ non auctorite 1208

Were in no book' / ȝe gentil of' honour
Seyn þat' men schulde an old wijf' do fauour
And clepe him fader for ȝour gentilnesse /
And auctours schal I fynden as I gesse / 1212
Now þer ȝe seyn þat' I am foul and olde
Than drede ȝou nought' to ben a cokewolde [leaf 106, back]
ffor filþe and helþe al so mote I þe
Ben grete wardeyns vpon chastite 1216
But' naþeles syn I knowe ȝoure delyt'
I schal fulfille your worldly appetyt'
Chees now quod sche on of' þese þinges tweye /
To han me foule and olde til þat' I deye 1220
And be to ȝow a trewe humble wijf'
And neuere ȝow displese in alle my lijf'
Or elles ȝe wol haue me ȝong' and fair
And take ȝour auenture of' þe repair 1224
That' schal come to your hous by cause of' me
Or in som oþer place wel may be
Now chees ȝour seluen wheþer þat' ȝou likeþ
þis knight' auysed him and sore sikeþ 1228
But' atte laste he seyde in þis manere
My lady and my loue and wijf' so deere
I putte me in ȝoure wise gouernañce
Cheseþ ȝour self' which may be most' plesance 1232
And most' honour to yow and me also
I do no force þe wheþer of' þe tuo
ffor as ȝou likeþ it sufficeþ me
þanne haue I gote of' ȝou maystrie quod sche 1236
Syn I may cheese and gouerne as me list'
ȝe certes wijf' quod he I holde it' for best'
kisse me quod sche we be no lenger wroþe /
ffor by my trouþe I wol be to yow boþe 1240
þis is to sein / to be boþe fair and good
I pray to god þat' I mote steruen wood
But' I to ȝou be also sad and trewe /
As euer was wijf' syn þat' þe world was newe 1244

And but' I be to morwe as fair to seene
As eny lady emp*er*ice or queene /
þat' is bitwen þe est' and eek' þe weste /
Do wiþ my lijf' and deþ right' as ȝou leste 1248
Cast' vp þe curteyne loke how it is / [*bottom of leaf* 106]
And whanne þat' þe knight' sawh al þis [leaf 115 *b*]
That' sche so fair was and so ȝong' þ*er*to
ffor ioye he hente hir in his armes tuo 1252
his herte baþed in a baþ of' blisse
A þousand tyme a rowe he gan hire kisse
And sche obeyed him in eu*er*y þing'
That' mighte doon him pleisance or likyng' 1256
And þus þey lyued vnto here lyues ende
In p*er*fyt' ioye and ih*es*u crist' vs sende
housbondes meke ȝonge and freissche abedde
And grace to ouerlede hem þat' we wedde 1260
And eek' I pray to Ih*es*u schorte here lyues
That' wol not' be gouerned by here wyues
And olde and angry nyggardes of' dispence 1263
God send hem sone a verray pestilence ¶ Explic*it*

Library

¶ Here bygynneþ þe prologe of þe ffrere /

¶ Incipit *prologus ffratris*

This worþy lymytour þis noble ffrere
he made alway lowrynge cheere
vpon þe somnour but for honeste
No vyleynes word as 3it spak he / 1268
But atte laste he seyde vnto þe wijf
Dame goode god 3if 3ou right good lijf
3e han touched heer al so mote I þe
In scole matier gret difficulte 1272
3e han seid mochel þing right wel I seye
But dame heere as we ryden by þe weye
Vs nedeþ nat to speken but of game
And late auctoritees a goddes name 1276
To p*re*ching & to scole eek of clergie /
But if it like vnto þis companye
I wol 3ou of a somnour telle a game
P*ar*de 3e may wel knowe by þe name 1280
That of no somno*ur* may no good be sayd
I pray þat non of 3ou be yuele payd
A somnour is a romere vp and doun
Wiþ amendement of fornicacio*u*n 1284
And is y-bete at eu*er*y townes ende [leaf 115, back]
Oure host þo spak a sire 3e scholde ben heende
And curteys as a man of 3our astat
In companye we wille no debat / 1288
Telleþ 3oure tale and lateþ þe somno*ur* be
Nay q*uod* þe somnour lat him seye to me
What so him list whan it comþ to my lot
By god I schal him quiten eu*er*y grot 1292
I schal him telle such a gret honour
It is to be a flateryng lymytour
And eek of ful many an oþer cryme
Which nedeþ nat/ rehersen at þis tyme 1296
And his office I schal him telle y-wys
Oure host answerde pees nomore of þis
And afterward he seyde vnto þe frere /
Telle forþ 3oure tale my leue mayster deere 1300

¶ Here bygynneth̄ þe
Whilom þer was dwellyng in Couentre ¶ ffreres tale
An erchedekne a man of heih degre
That boldely dide execuciōn
In punysschyng of fornicacioñ 1304
Of wicheraf and eek of Bawderie
Of diffamacioñ and auoutrie
Of chirche reeues and of testamentes
Of contractes and of lak of sacramentes 1308
Of vsure and Symonye also
But certes lecchours dede he grettest wo
They scholden syngen if þey were hent
And smale tyþeres weren foule y-schent 1312
If eny p*er*soñ wolde vpon hem pleyne
Ther might astirte him no pecunial peyne
ffor smale tyþes and eek for smal offrynge
he made þe poeple spitously to synge 1316
ffor or þe bisschop caugh̄t hem wiþ his hook
They weren in þe Erchedeknes book
And þanne hadde he þurgh̄ his Iurdictioñ
Power to don on hem correctioñ 1320
he hadde a somnour redy to his hande [leaf 116]
A sleyere boy was non in engelande
ffor sotilly he hadde his especiaile
That taughte him where þat him mighte auayle 1324
he coude spare of lecchours on or tuo
To techen him to foure and twenty mo
ffor þough þis somnour wood were as an hare
To telle his harlottrie I wil not spare 1328

ffor we ben oute of here correct*i*on
They han of vs no Iuresdictiõ
We neuer schullen terme of alle hire lyues
Petur so ben þe wo*m*men of þe Styues 1332
Quod þis Somno*ur* y-putt out of oure cure
Pees with meschance and with mysauenture
Thus seyde oure host and let him telle his tale
Now telleþ forþ and late þe somno*ur* gale 1336
Ne spareþ nought myn oughne maister deere
This false þeef þis somno*ur* q*uod* þe ffrere /
hadde alwey bawdes redy to his hond
As eny hauke to lure in Engelond 1340
That telle him al þe secre þat þey knewe
ffor here aqueintance was nat come of newe
þey weren his approwours priuely
he tok himself a gret profyt þ*er*by 1344
his maister knew nat alwey what he wan
Wiþouten maundement of a lewed man
he coude somne on peyne of cristes curs
And þey were ynly gladde to fille his purs 1348
And made him grete festes atte nale
And right as Iudas hadde purses smale
And was a þeef right swich a þeef was he
his mayster hadde but half his dewete 1352
he was if I schal ȝiuen him his laude
A theef and eek a sompno*ur* and a baude
he hadde eek wenches of his retenue
That wheþer þat s*ir* Roberd or s*ir* huwe 1356
Or Iohñ or Rauf or who þat it were [leaf 116, back]
That lay by hem þat tolde it in his eere
Thus was þe wenche and he of oon assent
And he wolde fecche a feyned maundement 1360
And somne hem to þe Chapitre boþe tuo
And pile þe man and late þe wenche go
þanne wolde he seye I schal freend for þy sake
Do strike þe out of oure lettres blake 1364

þe þar nomore as in þis cas t*ra*uayle
I am þi frend þer I þe may auayle
Certein he knew of briberies mo
þan possible is to telle ȝou vnto 1368
ffor in þis worlde is dogge for no bowe
That knew an hurt deer from an old bite kowe
Than þat þis sompno*ur* knew a sleigh lecchour
Or avouter or elles a p*ara*mour 1372
And for þat was þe fruyt of alle þe rent
Therfore on it he sette al his entent
And so bifell*e* þat ones on a day
This somnour euer waytyng on his pray 1376
Rode for to somne an old wijf a ribibe
ffeynyng a cause for he wolde bribe
And happede þat he seigh byfore hym ryde /
A gay yoman vnder a forest syde 1380
A bowe he bar and arwes bright and keene
he hadde vppon a courtepy of grene /
An hatte vppon his heed wiþ frenges blake
Sire q*uo*d þis Sompno*ur* hail and wel atake / 1384
Welcome q*uo*d he and eu*er*y good felawe
Whider ridestow vnder þis greene schawe
Seyde þis ȝeman wilt þou fer to day
This somnour him answerde and seyde nay 1388
here faste by q*uod* he is myn entente
To ryden for to reysen vp a rente /
It longeþ to my lordes dewete
Art þou þanne a baillif ȝe q*uo*d he 1392
he dorste nouȝt for v*er*ray filþe and schame [leaf 117]
Seie þat he was a somno*ur* for þe name
Dep*ar*dieux q*uod* þis ȝoman dere broþ*er*
þou art a bailly and I am anoþ*er* 1396
I am vnknowen as in þis cuntre
Of þin aqueintance I wil preye þe
And eek of breþerhode if þat þou leste
I haue golde and siluer in my cheste 1400

If þat þe happed come in-to oure schire
Al schal be þin right as þou wolt desyre
Graunt mercy quod þis somnour by my feiþ
Euerich in oþeres hond his trouþe leiþ 1404
ffor to be swore broþer til þey deye
and wiþ þat word þey ryden forþ here weye
This somnour wiþ þat was so /
As ful of venym ben þis wary-angles 1408
And euer enquiryng vpon euery þing
Broþer quod he wher is ȝoure dwellyng
Anoþer day if I scholde ȝou seche
This ȝoman him answerde in softe speche 1412
Broþer quod he fer in þe Norþ cuntre
Wher as I hope som tyme I schal þe se
Or we departe I schal þe so wel wisse
That of myn hous schalt þou neuer misse / 1416
Now broþer quod þis sompnour I ȝou pray
Teche me whil we ryden by þe way /
Syn þat ȝe ben a baillyf as am I
Som subtilte telle me feiþfully 1420
In myn office how þat I may most wynne
And spareþ not for conscience ne synne
But as my broþer tell me how do ȝe
Now by my trouþe broþer deere seyde he 1424
As I schal tellen þe a feiþful tale /
My wages ben ful streyte and smale /
My lord is hard to me and daungerous
And my office ful laborious 1428
And þerfore by extorciouns I lyue [leaf 117, back]
ffor soþe I [take] al þat men wil me ȝiue
Algate be sleigte or violence
ffrom ȝeer to ȝer I wynne al my dispence / 1432
I can no bettre tellen feiþfully
Now certes quod þis sompnour so fare I
I spare not to take god it wot
But if it be to heuy or to hoot 1436

What' I may gete in counseil p*ri*uely
No maner conscience of' þat' haue I
Ner myn extorcioñ I might' noȝt' lyuen
Of' swiche iapes wil I nat' be schriuen 1440
Stomake ne fro conscience knowe I noon
I schrewe þese schriftefadres euerichon
Wel be we mette by god and by seint' Iame
But' leeue broþ*er* telle me þanne þy name 1444
Quod þis somno*ur* in þis mene while
This ȝeman gan a litel for to smyle
Broþ*er* q*uo*d he wiltow þat' I þe telle
I am a steue my dwellyng' is in helle 1448
And heer I ryde aboute my purchasyng'
To wite wher men wil ȝif' me eny þing'
my purchace is to fette of' all*e* my rente
loke how þou rydest' for þe same entente 1452
To wynne good þou rekkest' neuer how
Right' so fare I for ryde wolde I now
vnto þe worldes ende for a preye
A q*uo*d þis somnour b*en*edicite what' ȝe seye 1456
I wende ȝe were a yoman trewely
ȝe han a mannes schappe as wel as I
han ȝe a figure þanne det*er*minat'
In helle þer ȝe ben in ȝoure estat' 1460
Nay certeinly quod he þer han we noon
But' whan vs likeþ we can take vs oon
Or elles make ȝou wene we ben schape
Som tyme [like] a man or like an ape / 1464
Or lik' an aungel can I ryde or go [leaf 118]
It' is no wonder þing' þoug̃h it be so
A lousy iogulour can deceyue þe
And par de ȝit' can I more craft' þan he / 1468
Why q*uo*d þis somnour ryde ȝe þanne or gon
In sondry schappe and nat' alwey in oon
ffor we quod he wille vs swich forme make
As most' able is oure prayes for to take 1472

What makeþ ȝou to han al þis labour
fful many a cause leeue sire somono*ur*
Seyde þis feend but al þing haþ tyme
The day is schort and it is passed p*ri*me 1476
And ȝet ne wan I no þing in þis day
I wil entende to wynnyng if I may
And nat entende oure wittes to declare
ffor broþ*er* myn þi witte is al to bare 1480
To vnderstonde þoug̃h I tolde hem þe
But for þou axest whi labouren we
ffor somtyme ben we goddes instrumentz
And menes to do his comaundementz 1484
Whan þat him list vpon his creatures
In diuerse acte and in diu*er*s figures
Wiþouten him we han no might certayn
If þat him liste to stonden þer agayn 1488
And som time at oure praye han we leue
Only þe body and not þe soule greeue /
Witnesse on Iob whom þat we dyden wo
And som tyme han we mig̃ht of boþe tuo 1492
þis is to seyn of soule and body eeke
And som tyme we ben suffred for to seeke
vpon a man and do his soule vnreste
Nat his body and al is for þe beste 1496
Whan he wiþstondeþ oure temptacio̅n
It is a cause of his saluacio̅n
Al be it þat it was not oure entente
he schulde be sauf but þat we wolde him hente 1500
And som tyme be we s*er*uantz vn-to man [leaf 118, back]
As þe erchebisschop*e* seint Dunstan
And to þe apostles s*er*uant/ was I
ȝet telleþ me q*uod* þe somnour feiþfully 1504
Make ȝe ȝow newe bodyes þus alwey
Of elementz þe feend answerde nay
Som tyme we feyne and som tyme we arise /
Wiþ dede bodyes in ful sondry wise 1508

And speke as renabely and faire and wel
As to þe phitonessa dede Samuel /
And ȝit wol some men say it was nat he
I do no force of ȝoure diuinite 1512
But o þing warne I þe I wil nat Iape
Thou wilt algates wite how we be schape /
þou schalt her aftirward my broþ*er* deere
Come wher þe needeþ nat of me to leere 1516
ffor þou schalt by þin owne exp*er*ience
Come in-to þe chayer rede þis sentence
Bet þan virgile whil he was a lyue
Or dante also now lat vs ryde blyue 1520
ffor I wil holde company wiþ þe
Til it be so þat þou forsake me
Nay q*uo*d þis somno*ur* þat schal nat betyde
I am a ȝeman knowe is ful wyde 1524
my trouþe wil I holde to þe as in þis cas
ffor þey þou were þe deuyl Sathanas
My trouþe wil I holde to my broþer
As I am sworne and eche of vs to oþer 1528
ffor to be trewe broþer in þis cas
And broþ*er* we gon to oure purchas
Take þou þy part what men þe wole yiue
And I schal myn þus may we boþe lyue 1532
And if þat eny of vs haue more þan oþer
lat him be trewe and parte it wiþ his broþer
I g*ra*unte q*uo*d þe deuyl by my fay
And wiþ þat word þey ryden forþ here way 1536
And right at þentryng of þe tounes ende [leaf 119]
To which þe somno*ur* schop him for to wende
They say a carte þat charged was with hey
Which þat a cartere drof forþ on his wey 1540
Deep was þe wey for whiche þe carte strood
This cartere smot and striued as he were wood
hayt brok hayt scot what spare we for þe stones
The feend quoþ he ȝow fecche boþe body and bones / 1544

As ferforþly as euere were ȝe foled
So moche woo as I haue for ȝou þoled
þe deuel haue al boþe hors and cart and hey
þoughte þis somno*ur* he schulle we haue a pley 1548
And neer þe feend he drough as nought ne were
fful priuely and rouned in his eere
herkne my broþer herkne by þy feiþ
herestow nat how þe cartere seiþ 1552
hente it anone for he haþ ȝiuen þe
Boþe hey and carte and eek his caples þre /
Nay q*uo*d þe deuyl god not neuer a del
It is not his entente truste me wel 1556
Aske him þiself if þou nat trowest me
Or elles stynte a while and þou schalt se
This carter þakked his hors on þe croupe /
And þey bygonne to drawe and to stoupe / 1560
hayt now q*uo*d he þat Ih*e*su crist ȝou blisse
And all*e* his hondywerk boþe more and lesse /
þat was wel twight myn owne lyard boy
I p*ra*y god saue þe and seinte Loy. 1564
Now is my carte out/ of þe slough p*ar* de
lo broþer q*uod* þe feend what tolde I þe /
here may ye see myn oughne deere bro*þer*
The carle spak o þing but he þought ano*þer* 1568
late vs go forþ abouten oure viage
here wynne I noþing vpon cariage
Whan þat þey comen somwhat out of þe toun)
þis somnour to his broþer gan to roun) 1572
Broþer q*uod* he her*e* woneþ an old rebekke [leaf 119, back]
That hadde almost as leef to leese hir*e* necke
As for to ȝiue a peny of hire good
I wil haue twelue pens þough þat sche be wood 1576
Or I wille sompne hire to oure office
And ȝit god woot of hire knowe I no vice
But for þou canst nat as in þis contre
Wynne þi coste tak here ensample of/ me 1580

This somnour clappeþ at þe wydowes gate
Com out he seyde þou olde viritrate
I trowe þou hast som frere or prest wiþ þe
Who clappeþ seyde þis wijf benedicite 1584
God saue ȝou sire what is ȝour swete wille
I haue q*uod* he a somon*ur* of þe here a bille
vp peyne of cursyng loke þat þou be
To morwe biforn oure erchedekenes kne 1588
To answere to þe court of certein þinges
Now lord q*uod* sche crist ih*e*su heuen king*es*
So wisly helpe me as I ne may
I haue ben syk and þat ful many a day 1592
I may nat gon so fer q*uod* sche ne ryde
But I be deed so prikeþ it in my syde /
May I nat axe a libel sire somono*ur*
And answere þere by my p*ro*cutour 1596
To swich a þing as men wolde appose me /
ȝis q*uo*d þis somno*ur* pay anon lat se
Twelue pens to me and I wil þe aquite
I schal no p*ro*fyt haue þ*er*-by but lite 1600
My maister haþ þe p*ro*fyt/ and nat I
Come of and late me ryden hastily
ȝeue me twelue [pens] I may no lenger tarye
twelue q*uod* sche lady seinte marie 1604
So wisly help me out of care and synne
þis wyde world þough þat I scholde it wynne
Ne haue I not xij. pens wiþinne myn holde
ȝe knowen wel þat I am pouer and olde 1608
kyþe ȝoure almesse on me pouere wrecche [leaf 120]
Nay þanne q*uod* he þe foule feend me fecche
If I þe excuse þough þou scholde be spilt
Allas q*uod* sche god wot I haue no gilt 1612
Pay me q*uod* he or by þe swete seint anne
As I wol bere a-way þy newe panne /
ffor dette which þou owest me of old
Whan þat þou madest þin housbond kukkewold 1616

I preyde at home for þy correctioñ
Thow lixt *quod* sche by my sauacioñ
Ne was I neuer or now wydewe ne wijf
Somoned vnto your court in al my lijf 1620
Ne neuer I nas but of my body trewe /
vnto þe deuel blake and rowe of hewe
yeue I þy body and my panne
And whan þe deuyl herde hir curse so 1624
vpon hir knees he seyde in þis manere
Now mabely myn owne mooder deere
It is ȝour wille in ernest þat ȝe seye
þe deuyl *quod* sche fette him or he deye / 1628
And panne and al but he wil him repente
Nay olde stot þat is not my*n* entente
Quoþ þis somno*ur* for to repente me
ffor any þing þat I haue had of þe 1632
I wolde I hadde þy smok and eu*er*y cloþ
Now broþer q*uo*d þe deuyl be nat wroþ
þy body and þis panne is my*n* by right
þou schalt wiþ me to helle yet to nigħt 1636
Wher þou schalt knowen of oure priuete
More þan a mayster of diuinite
And wiþ þat word þis foule feend him hent
Body and soule he with þe deuyl went 1640
Where þat somno*ur*s han here heritage
And god þat made after his ymage
Mankynde saue and gyde vs all*e* and some
And leeue þis somnour good man to bycome 1644
lordinges I couþe han told ȝou q*uod* þis frere [leaf 120, back]
hadde I had leysir for þis somnour heere
After þe tixte of crist poule and Iohñ
And of oure oþer doctours many oon 1648
Suche peynes þat ȝoure hertes mighħt agrise
Al be it so no tonge may deuyse /
þoughħ þat I mighħt a þousand wynt*er* telle
þe peyne of þilke cursed hous of helle 1652

But for to kepe vs fro þat cursed place
Wakeþ and prayeþ ihesu for his grace
So kepe vs fro þe temptour Sathanas
herkneþ þis word be war as in þis cas 1656
þe leoun sitte in his awayte alway
To sle þe Innocent if þat he may
Disposeþ ay ȝour hertes to wiþstonde
þe feend þat ȝou wolde make þralle and bonde 1660
he may nat tempten yow ouer your might
ffor crist wille be ȝour championn and knight
And preyeþ þat þis somnour him repente 1663
Of his mysdede or þat þe feend him hente ¶ Explicit

¶ Her endeþ þe ffrere his tale /

This Somnour in his styrop heyhe stood [*on leaf* 120, *back*]
Vpon þis frere his herte was so wood
That lik an aspen leef he quok for Ire
lordynges q*uod* he but o þing I desire / 1668
I ȝou beseche þat of ȝour curtesye
Siþ ȝe han herde þis false frere lye
As suffreþ me I may a tale telle
This frere bosteþ þat he koweþ helle/ 1672
And god wot þat it is litel wonder
ffreres and feendes ben but litel asonder
ffor parde ȝe han. ofte tyme herd telle/
how þat a frere rauyssched was in helle 1676
In spirit ones by avisio*un*
And as an aungel ladde him vp and do*un*
To schewen him þe peynes þat þer were
In alle þe place saugh̄ he nat a ffrere [leaf 121] 1680
Of oþer folk he saugh̄ ynowe in woo
Vnto þis aungel spak þe frere þo
Now sire q*uod* he han freres such a grace /
That non of hem schal come to þis place / 1684
ȝis quod þis aungel many a milio*un*
And vnto Sathanas he hadde him doun
And now haþ Sathanas saiþ he a taile
Bradder þan of þe Caryk is þe saile 1688
hold vp þi tayl þou Satanas q*uod* he /
Schew forþ þin ersand lat þe frere se /
Wher is þe neste of ffreres in þis place
And er þat half a forlong wey of space 1692

Right so as bees swermen out of an hyue
Out of þe deueles ers þey gon to dryue
Twenty þousand freres on a route
And þoughte helle swarme al aboute 1696
And camen aȝein as faste as þey mighte gon
And in his ers þey crepeden euerichon
he clapte his tayl aȝein and lay stille
This frere whan he loked hadde his fille 1700
vppon þis tormentes of þis sory place /
his spirit god restored of his grace /
Vnto his body aȝein and he awok
But naþeles for feere ȝit he quok 1704
So was þe deueles ars ay in his mynde
þat is his heritage of verray kinde
God saue ȝow alle saue þis cursed frere /
My prologe wol I ende in þis manere / 1708

¶ Here begynneþ þe Somnour*s* tale

LOrdynges þer is in yorkꝑ schire / as I gesse
A mersshy countre called Holdernesse
In which þer wente a lymyto*ur* aboute /
To preche and eekꝑ to begge itꝑ is no doute 1712
And so bifelle þatꝑ on a day þis frere
Hadde preched atte cherche in þis manere
And specially abouen eu*er*y þingꝑ [leaf 121, back]
Excited he þe poeple in his p*re*chingꝑ 1716
To trentales and for goddes sake
Ther-with men mighten holy houses make
Ther as diuin seruice is honoured
Noughꝑ þer as itꝑ is wasted and deuoured 1720
Ne þer itꝑ nedeþ notꝑ for to be ȝiue
As to possessioners þatꝑ may elles lyue
þanked be god in wele and habundañce
Trentales seyde he deliereþ fro penañce 1724
here frendes soules as wel olde as ȝonge
Ifꝑ þatꝑ þey ben hastily y-songe
Noughꝑ for to holde a prestꝑ ioly and gay
he syngeþ notꝑ but o messe in a day 1728
Delyereþ outꝑ q*uod* he anon þe soules
fful hard it is wiþ fleisshookꝑ o*þer* with oules
Now speed ȝou hastely for cristes sake 1732
to kepe ȝou fro peynes ofꝑ feendes blake 1731
And whan þe frere hadde seyde al his entente
Wiþ Qui cum p*at*re forþ he wente
Whan folkꝑ in chirche hadde ȝiue him what hem leste
he wente his way no lenger wolde he reste 1736

Wiþ scrippe and tipped staf' tukked ful hye
In euery hous he gan to pore and prye
And beggeþ mele or chese or elles corn)
his felaw had a staf' typped with horn) 1740
A payre of' tabeles of' yuory
And a poyntel polisshed fetously
And wrot' þe names alwey as he stood
Of' any folk' þat' ȝaf' hem eny good 1744
Ascance þat' he wolde for hem preye
ȝiue vs a busshel whete malt/ or reye
A goddes kechil or a trippe of' chese
Oþer elles what ȝow list' we may nat cheese 1748
A goddes halpeny oþer a masse peny
Oþer ȝiue vs of' ȝour bran̄ if' ȝe haue eny
A dagoun of' ȝour blanket' leeue dame [leaf 122]
Oure suster deere here I write ȝoure name 1752
Bacon̄ or beef' or such þing' as ȝe fynde
A sturdy harlot' wente hem ay behynde
That' was here hostes man and bar a sakke
And what' men ȝaf' hem leyde it on his bakke 1756
And whan he was out' at' þe dore anoon
he planed awey þe names eu*er*ychoon
That' he bifore hadde writen in his tables
he s*er*ued hem with nyfles and with fables 1760
Nay þer þou lixt' þou somno*ur* q*uod* þe frere /
Pees quod oure host' for cristes moder deere
Telle forþ þi tale spare it not' at' al
So þryue I q*uod* þis somno*ur* so I schal 1764
So longe he wente hous by hous q*uod* he
Til he come to an hous þer he was wont' to be
Refresshed more þan in an .C. places
Seke lay þe bonde man) whos þe place is 1768
And vpon a kowche lowe he lay
Deus hic' q*uod* he / O Thomas frend good day
Seyde þis frere curteysly and softe
Thom*a*s sayde he god ȝelde ȝow ful ofte 1772

haue I vpon þis benche faren wel
heere haue I eten many a mery meel
And fro þe benche he drof' awey þe cat
And leyde doun his potent' and his hat 1776
And eek' his scrippe and sette him softe a doun
his felawe was go walked in þe toun
fforþ with his knaue in-to þat' ostelrie
Wher as he schop him þilke night' to lye 1780
O deere maister q*uod* þis seeke man
how han ȝe fare siþenes þat' marche bigan
I say ȝow nought' þis fourtenight' and more
God woot' q*uod* he laboured haue I ful sore 1784
And specially for þy Saluacion
haue I seyde many a p*re*cious orison
And for oure o*þer* frendes god hem blesse [leaf 122, back]
I haue to day don at' ȝoure chirche a messe 1788
A sayd a s*er*mon after my simple wit'
nought' all*e* aft*er* þe text' of' holy writ'
ffor it is hard to ȝou as I suppose
þerfore wol I teche to ȝou al þe glose 1792
Glosyng' is a glorious þing' certein
ffor lettre sleeþ so as clerkes sein
þer haue I taught' hem to be charitable
And spende here good þer it' is resonable 1796
There I sawh oure dame a wher is sche
yonde in þe yerde I trowe þat' sche be /
Seyde þis man and sche wil come anon
Ey mayster welcome be ȝe by seint/ Iohn 1800
Seyde þis wijf' how fare ȝe hertely
þe frere ariseþ vp ful curteisly
And hir enbrased in his armes narwe
And kisseþ hir swete and chirkeþ as a sparwe 1804
Wiþ his lippes dame q*uod* he right' wel
As he þat is your s*er*uant' eueridel
I-þanked be god þat' ȝou ȝaf' soule and lyf'
ȝit/ sawh I not' to day so fair a wijf' 1808

In al þe chirche god so saue me
ȝe god amende defautes s*ir* q*uod* sche
Algates welcome be ȝe by my fey
Gramercy dame þis haue I founde alwey 1812
But' of' ȝour grete goodnes by ȝour leeue
I wolde pray ȝou þat' ȝe nought' ȝou greue
I wole with Thom*as* speken a litel þrowe
þese curates ben ful necligent/ and slowe 1816
To grope tendrely a conscience
In schrifte and in p*re*ching' is my diligence
And studye in petres wordes and in poules
I walke and fisshe mennes soules 1820
To ȝelde ih*es*u crist/ his p*ro*pre rente
To sprede his wordes is sette al my*n* entente
¶ Now by ȝour leeue o deere sire q*uod* sche [leaf 123]
Chydeþ him wel for god in trinite 1824
he is as angry as a pissemire
þey þat' he haue al þat' he can desire
þey I him wrye a nigh̄t' and make him warm
And ouer him leye my legg' or arm 1828
he groyneþ lik' oure boor gronyng' in sty
Oþer desport' of' him right' non haue I
I may not' plesen him in no maner caas
¶ Ieo vo*us* dy trescher & bien amy O Thom*as* 1832
This makeþ þe feende þis mot' ben amended
Ire is a þing' þat' heye god defended
And þer-of' wol I speke a word or tuo
Now maister q*uod* þe wijf' or þat' I go 1836
What' wol ȝe dyne I wole go þ*er* aboute
Now dame q*uod* he Ieo vo*us* dye sanz doute
haue I not' of' a Capon̄ but' þe lyuere
And of' ȝour softe brede but' a schyuere 1840
And after þat' a rosted pigges heed
But' þat' I wolde for me no beeste were deed
þanne hadde I wiþ ȝou holly suffisan̄ce
I am a man of' litel sustenance / 1844

My spirit is fostred in þe bible
þe body is ay so redy and penyble
To wake þat my stomak is destroyed
I pray ȝou dame þat ȝe be nought anoyed 1848
þey I so frendly my counseil to ȝou schewe
By god I wolde not telle it/ but a fewe
Now sire q*uod* sche but oo word or I go
my child is deed wiþinne þise wikes tuo 1852
Siþþen þat ȝe wente out of þis toun
his deþ saugh̄ I by reuelacioñ
Seiþ þis frere at home in oure dortour
I dar wel seyn þat/ er þat half an hour 1856
after his deþ I sawh him born to blisse
In my*n* avisioñ so god me wisse
So dede our sextein and oure fermorer [leaf 123, back]
That han ben trewe freres. fyfty ȝeer 1860
They may now god by þanke of his lone
maken here Iubile and walken allone
And vp I ros and all*e* oure couent eeke
With many a teere trillyng on my cheeke 1864
Wiþouten noyse or clateryng of bellis
Te de*um* was oure song and no þing elles
Saue þat to crist I seyde an orisoñ
Thankyng him of his reuelacioñ 1868
ffor sire and dame trusteþ me right wel
Oure orisons ben more spirituel
And more we se of cristes secre þinges 1871
Than burel folk [though they were kynges [Harl. 1758, *leaf* 109]
We lyue in pouerte & in abstynence.
And boreH folke] in richesse and wynnynges[1] [[1] in dispence. *Harl.* 1758]
Of mete and drynk and in here foul delit/
We han þis worldes lust al in despit 1876
Lazar and Diues liueden dyuersely
And dyuerse guerdoñ hadde þey þ*er*by
Who-so wol preye he moot faste and be clene
And fatte his soule and make his cheekes lene 1880

We fare as seiþ þapostil cloþ and foode
Sufficeþ vs þeyȝ þey ben not goode
The clennes and þe fastyng of ous ffreres
makeþ þat crist accepteþ oure prayeres 1884
lo moyses .xl. dayes and .xl. nyght
ffasted or þat þe heihe god of might
Spak wiþ him in þe mount of Synay
With empty wombe fastyng many a day 1888
Receyued he þe lawe þat was writen
Wiþ goddes fynger and helthe wel ȝe witen
In þe mon̄t or elles er he hadde eny speche
With heyhe god þat is oure lyues leche 1892
he fasted longe and was in contemplañce
And aaron þat hadde þe temple of god in gou*er*nañce
And eek þat o*þer* prestes eu*er*ichon
In-to þe temple whan þey scholden gon 1896
To praye for þe poeple and do seruise [leaf 124]
They nolden drynken in no maner wise/
No drynk þe which hem mighte drunke make
But euere in abstynence to preye and wake 1900
lest þat þey deyede tak heede what I seye
But þey ben sobre þat for þe poeple preye
Ware þat I say no more for it suffiseþ
Oure lord ih*esus* / as holy god deuyseþ 1904
ȝiueþ ous ensample of fastyng and p*ra*yeres
Therfore we mendinañtz we pou*er*e freres
Ben wedded to pouert and to continence
To charite humblesse and also pacience 1908
To p*er*secucion̄ for rightwisnesse /
To wepyng misericorde and clennesse
And þ*er*fore may ȝe see þat oure prayeres
I speke of vs we mendenañte ffreres 1912
Ben to þe hihe god more acceptable
Than ȝoures wiþ ȝoure feste at þe table
ffro p*ar*adys first if I schal nought lye
Was man out chaced for his glotonye 1916

And chast' was man in p*ar*adys certayn
But' herkne þere what' I schal ȝou sayn
I haue no text' of' þat' as I suppose
But' I schal fynde it in a maner glose 1920
That' specially oure swete lord Ih*es*us
Spak' þus by vers whan he seyde þus
Blessed ben þey þat' pore in spirit/ ben
And so forþ al þe gospel may ȝe seen 1924
Wher it' be like oure p*ro*fessioñ
Or hem þat' swymmen in possessioñ
ffy on here pompe and on here glotonye
And for here lewednesse I hem diffye 1928
Me þinkeþ þey ben like Iovinian)
ffatte as a whale and walking' as a swan)
As vynolent' as botel in þe spence
here prayer is ful of' gret' reuerence 1932
Whan þey for soules sein þe psalme of' dauid [leaf 124, back]
lo buff' þey sain cor meu*m* eructauit'
Who folweþ cristes gospel and his lore
But' we þat' humble be and chaste and pore 1936
Werkers of' goddes word and eek' auditoures /
þerfore right' as an hauke rype at' a so*ur*s
vp springeþ vnto þe ayre right' so p*ray*eres
Of' charitable and chaste besy freres 1940
maken here so*ur*s to goddes eeren and who
Thom*as* þ*er*fore so mote I ride or go
And by þat' god þat' cleped is seint' yue
Nere þou oure broþ*er* schuldest' þou not' priue 1944
In oure chapitre praye we day and night'
To crist' þat' he sende þe hele and might'
Thy body for to welden hastily
God wot' q*uod* he noþing' þ*er*-of' wot' I 1948
As helpe me crist' as in fewe ȝeeres
haue I spended vpon diu*er*s maner freres
fful many a pound ȝit' fare I neuer þe bett'
Certein my good haue I almost' bisett' 1952

ffar wel my golde for it is al a-go
The ffrere answerde o Thom*a*s why dost þou so
What needeþ ȝou diuerse freres to seche
What needeþ him þat haþ a p*ar*fit leche 1956
To sechen oþer leches in þe toun
ȝour inconstance is ȝour confusio*un*
holde ȝe þen me or elles oure couent
To preye for ȝou ben insufficient 1960
Thom*a*s þat Iape is not worþ a myte
ȝoure maladye is for ȝe han ȝiuen vs so lite
A ȝif þat couent half a quarter otes
A ȝiue hem one or tuo grotes 1964
A ȝiue þe frere a peny and let him go
Nay nay Thom*a*s it may no þing be so
What is a ferþing worþ parted in twelue
lo eche þing þat is oned by himselue 1968
Is more straunge þen when it is skatered [leaf 125]
Thom*a*s of me þou schalt nat be flatered
þou woldest oure labour haue for nought
The hihe god þat al þis world haþ wrought 1972
Seiþ þat þe werkman is worþi his hyre
Thom*a*s nought of ȝour tresore I desire
As for my self but þat all*e* oure couent
To pray for ȝou is ay so diligent 1976
And for to bulden cristes oughne chirche
Thom*a*s if ȝe wol lerne for to wirche
Of buldyng vp of chirches may ȝe fynde
If it be good in Thom*a*s lijf of Inde 1980
ȝe ligge heer ful of anger and of Ire
With þe which þe deuyl sette ȝoure ers a fyre
And chyden heere þis sely Innocent
ȝoure wijf þat is so meeke and pacient 1984
And þ*er*fore Thom*a*s trowe me if ȝou list
Ne stryue not wiþ þy wijf al for þe beste
And bere þis word awey now by þy feith
Touchinge such þing lo what þe wise man seiþ 1988

Wiþinne þin hous ne be þou no leoun
To þy subiectis do non opp*r*essioun
Ne make þin acqueintance not for to fle
And Thom*a*s ȝit eft sones say I þe 1992
Be war for hire þat in þy bosom slepeþ
Be war of þe s*er*pent þat so slyly crepeþ
vnder þe grasse þat styngeþ subtilly
Be war my sone and herkene paciently 1996
That xx^ti^ þousand men han lost here lyues /
ffor þat þei han ben spitous to here wyues
Now siþ ȝe han so holy and so meeke a wijf
What needeþ ȝou Thom*a*s to make strif 2000
þer is y-wys no s*er*pent so cruel
Whan men trede on his tail ne half so fel
As wo*m*man is whan sche haþ caught an Ire
Vengance is þanne al þat þey desyre 2004
Ire is a synne on of þe grete of seuene [leaf 125, back]
Abhominable vnto þe god of heuene
And to himself it is destructioñ
þis eu*er*y lewed vicary or p*ar*soñ 2008
Can say how Ire engendreþ homicide
Ire in soþ is executor of pryde
I couþe of Ire seye so mochil sorwe
My tale scholde laste til to morwe 2012
And þerfore I p*ra*ye god boþe day and night
An Irous man sende him litel mig̃ht
It is gret harm and certes gret pite
To sette an Irous man in heih degre 2016
¶ Whilom þ*er* was an Irous potestat
As seiþ Senek durynge his estat
Vpon a day out riden knightes tuo
And as fortune wolde it were so 2020
That oon of hem cam home þat oþer nog̃ht
Anon þe knig̃ht bifore þe Iuge is brog̃ht
And seyde þus þou hast þy felaw slayn
ffor which I deme þe to deþ certain 2024

And to anoþer' knight' comaunded he
Go lede him to þe deþ I charge þe
And happed as þey wente by þe weye
Toward þe place þer as he schulde deye 2028
The knight' cam which þey wend hadde be deed
Thenne þoughten þey it' were þe beste reed
To lede hem boþe to þe Iuge ȝein
þey seyden lord þe knight' ne haþ not' sleyn 2032
his felawe here he stant' on lyue
ȝe schulle be deed q*uod* he so mot' I þriue
þis is to say boþe oon and tuo and þre
And to þe firste knight' right' þus spak' he 2036
I dampned þe þou most' algate be deed
And þou also most' needes lese þin heed
ffor þou art' cause why þy felaw deyþ
And to þe þridde knight' right' þus he seiþ 2040
Thou hast' not' don þat' I comaunded þe [leaf 126]
And þus he dede do slee hem alle þre
Irous kambises was eek' drunkelewe
And ay delited him to ben a schrewe 2044
And so bifelle a lord of' his meigne
That' loued v*er*tuous moralite
Sayde on a day vnto himself' right' þus
A lord is lost' if' he be vicious 2048
And drunkenesse is eek' a foul record
Of' any man and namly in a lord
Ther is ful many an ey and many an eere
Awaytyng' on a lord and he not' where 2052
ffor goddes loue drynkeþ more attemp*er*elly
Wyn makeþ a man to lese wrecchedly
his mynde and eek' his lymes eu*er*ychon
The reuers schalt' þou see q*uod* he anoon 2056
And proue it' by þin owne exp*er*ience
That' wyn doþ to folk' no such offence
Ther is no wyn byreueþ me my might'
Of' hande ne foot' ne of' myn eyȝen sight' 2060

And for despite he dranke ful moche more
An hundred part' þan he had don bifore
And right' anon þis cursede wrecche
lete þis knightes sone biforn him fecche 2064
And co*m*maundyng' hem þey schulde biforn him stonde
And sodeinly he took' his bowe on honde
And vp þe streng' he pulled to his eere
And wiþ an arwe he slough þe child right' þere 2068
Now wheþer haue I a siker hond or non
Quoþ he is al my might' and my witte agon
haþ wyn byreued me my*n* yhe sight'
What' schulde I telle þe answere of' þe knight 2072
his sone was slayn þer is namore to say
Beþ war þ*er*fore wiþ lordes how ȝe play
Syngeþ placebo and I schal if' I can
But' if' it' be vnto a pouere man 2076
To a pou*er*e man men scholde his vices telle / [leaf 126, back]
But' not' to a lord þei he schulde go te helle /
Lo Irrous Sirus þilke P*er*cien
how he destroyed þe ryuer of' Gysen) 2080
ffor þat' an hors of' his was dreynt' þ*er*inne
Whan þat' he wente Babilon) to wynne
he made þat' þe ryuer was so smal
That' wo*m*men mighten waden ou*er*al 2084
lo what' seyde he þat' so wel teche can)
Ne he no felawe to an yrous man
Ne wiþ no wood man walke by þe way
leste þe repente I wol nomore say 2088
Now Thom*as* leeue broþ*er* leue þin Ire
Thou schalt' me fynde as iuste as is a squire
holde nought' þe deueles knyf' ay at' þin herte /
Thin anger doþ þe al to sore smerte 2092
But schewe to me all*e* þy confessioñ
Nay q*uod* þis seeke man by seint' Symoñ
I haue ben schriuen þis day at' my curate
I haue him tolde al holly myn estate 2096

It' needeþ nomore speke of' it sayde he
But' if' me luste of' myn humilite
ȝiue me þenne of' þy gold to make oure cloystre
Quod he for many a muscle and many an oystre 2100
haþ ben our foode oure cloystre for to reyse
Whan oþer men han ben ful wel at' eyse
And ȝit' god wot' vnneþes þe foundement
Parformed is ne of' oure pauyment' 2104
Nis nought' a tile ȝit' wiþinne oure wones
By god we owen fourty pound for stoones /
Now helpe thom*a*s for him þat' harwed helle
Or elles moote we oure bokes selle 2108
And if' we lacke oure p*re*dicacioñ
þanne goþ þe world al to destruccioñ
ffor whos wolde fro þis world vs byreue
So god me saue Thom*a*s by ȝoure leeue 2112
he wolde byreue out' of' þe world þe sonne / [leaf 127]
ffor who can teche and werchen as we konne
And þat' is not' of' litel time q*uod* he
But' sethyns Elye was or Elyze 2116
han freres ben þat' fynde I of' record
In charite I-þanked be oure lord
Now Thom*a*s help for seinte charite
A-doun anon he sette him on his kne 2120
This sike man wex wel neigh̄ wood for Ire
he wolde þat' þe frere hadde ben a fuyre
With his fals dissimilacioñ
Such þing' as is her in my possessioñ 2124
Quod he þat' I may ȝiue and non oþ*er*
ȝe sein me þus / þat' I am ȝour broþ*er*
ȝe certes q*uod* þe ffrere trusteþ me wel
I took' oure dame oure lettres wiþ oure seel 2128
¶ Now wel q*uod* he and somwhat' schal I ȝiue
vnto ȝour holy couent' whil I lyue
And in þin hand þou schalt' it' han anon
vp þis condicioñ and oþer non 2132

þat þou departe it so myn owne deere broþer
That euery frere haue as moche as oþer
þis schalt þou swere on þy professioñ
Wiþouten fraude or cauellacioñ 2136
I swere it quod þis frere vpon my feiþ
And þer wiþal his hond in his he leiþ
lo heer my feiþ in me schal be no lacke
þan putte þin hond doun by my bakke 2140
Sayde þis man and grope wel byhynde
Bynepe my buttok þere schalt þou fynde
A þing þat I haue hidde in priuete
A þought þis frere þat schal go wiþ me 2144
And doun his hande he launceþ vnto þe clifte
he hopede þere for to fynden a ȝifte
And þanne ful besy was þis frere
Abouten his tuwel gropyng here and þere 2148
¶ Amydde his hand he leet þe frere a fart [leaf 127, back]
Ther is no capel drawyng in þe cart
þat mighte haue lete a fart of such a soun
þe frere vp sterte as it were a fers leoun 2152
A false cherl quod he for cokkes bones
This hast þou for despite doon for þe nones
þou schalt abeye þi farte if þat I may
his meigne which þat herden þis affray 2156
Cam lepynge in and chased out þe ffrere
And forþ he goþ wiþ a ful angry cheere
And fette his felawe þer as lay his store
he loked as it were a wilde boor 2160
he grynded his teeþ so was he wroþ
A stourdy paas doun to þe court he goþ
Wher as þer woned a man of gret honour
To whom þat he was alwey confessour 2164
This worþy man was lord of þat village
þis frere cam as þough it were in a rage
Wher as þis lord sat etyng at his bord
vnneþes might þe frere speke a word 2168

Til atte laste he seyde god ȝou se
þis lord gan loke and seyde *benedicite*
Quod he frere Iohn̄ what maner world is þis
I see wel þat' som þing' is amys 2172
ȝe loken as þe woode were ful of' þeeues
Sit' doun anon and telle me what' ȝour greef' is
And it' schal ben amended if' þat' I may
I haue q*uod* he had a despit' to day 2176
God ȝelde ȝou a-do*un* in ȝoure village
þat' in þis world is non so pore a page
þat' he nolde han abhominacion̄
Of' þat' I haue receyued in þis toun 2180
And ȝit' me greueþ no þing' so sore
As þat' þis olde cherl wiþ lokkes hore
Blasphemed haþ oure holy couent' eeke
Now maister q*uod* þis lord I ȝou beseke 2184
No maister q*uod* he but' a *ser*uitour [leaf 125]
þey I haue had in scole þat' hono*ur*
God likeþ nouȝt' þat' men vs Raby calle
neiþer in market' ne in ȝour halle 2188
No force q*uod* he but' telle me of ȝour greef'
sire q*uod* þis frere an ydious mescheef'
This day betidde is to my*n* ordre and to me
And so p*ar* consequen*s* to eche degre 2192
Of' holy chirche god amende it' sone
Sire q*uod* þe lord ȝe wot' what' is to doone
Distempre ȝou nought' ȝe be my confessour
ȝe ben þe salt/ of' þerþe and þe sauour 2196
ffor goddes loue ȝoure pacience ȝe holde
Telleþ me ȝour greef' and he anon him tolde
As ȝe han herd byfore ȝe wot' wel what'
The lady of' þe hous ay stille sat' 2200
Til sche hadde herde what' þe frere sayde
Ey goddes moder q*uod* sche blisful mayde
Is þer nouȝt' elles telleþ me feiþfully
¶ madame q*uod* he how þenke ȝou *þer*by 2204

how þat me þenkeþ q*uod* sche so god me spede
I say a cherl haþ don a cherles deede
what schulde I say god let him neuer þe
his seeke heed is ful of vanite 2208
I holde him in a maner frenesye
Madame q*uod* he by god I schal not lye
but I on oþer wise may ben awreke
I schal sclaundre him ou*er*al wher I speke 2212
The false blasphemo*ur* þat charged me
To parte þat might nouȝt departed be
To euery man y-liche wiþ meschau*n*ce
þe lord sat stille as he lay in a traunse 2216
And in his herte he rolled vp and do*un*
how hadde þis cherl ymaginacio*un*
To schewe such a probleme to þe frere
Neuer erst er now herde I of such matere 2220
I trowe þe deuyl putte it in his mynde [leaf 128, back]
In ars metrik schal þer no man fynde
Biforn þis day of such a questioñ
Who schulde make a demonstracioñ 2224
þat euery man schulde haue y-lik his part
Of a so*un* or of a sauour of a fart
O nyce proude cherle I schrewe his face
lo sires q*uod* þe lord wiþ harde g*r*ace 2228
Who herde euer of such a þing er now /
To eu*er*y man ylike telle me how
It is a impossible it may not be
O nyce cherle god let him neuer þe 2232
þe rublyng of a fart and euery soun
Nys but of eyre reuellacio*un*
And þer-wiþ wasteþ litel and litel away
þer is no man can deme by my fay 2236
If þat it/ were departed equaly
What lo my cherle lo ȝit how schrewedely
vnto my confesso*ur* to day he spak
I holde him certein a demoniak 2240

Now eteþ ȝoure mete and leteþ him go pleye
lete him go hange himself a deuelweye

[*The Solution of the "Probleme" by the Lord's Squire. No break in the MS.*]

Now stood þe lordes squier at þe bord
þat karf here mete and herde word for word 2244
Of alle þing of which I haue ȝou sayd
my lord q*uod* he beþ not yuele payd
I couþe telle for a gowne cloþ
To ȝou sir frere so ȝe ben nat wroþ 2248
how þat þis fart scholde euene deled be
Among ȝour couent/ if it like me
Telle on q*uod* þe lord and þou schalt haue anon
A gowne cloþ by god and by seint Iohn̄ 2252
My lord q*uod* he whan þat þe weder is faire
Wiþouten wynd or p*er*tourbyng of ayre
let bringe a cart whel heer in-to þis halle
But loke þat he haue his spokes alle 2256
xij. spokes haþ a carte whel comunly [leaf 129]
And bringe me þanne .xij. freres wite ȝe why
ffor .xiij. is a couent as I gesse
ȝoure confessour hede for his worþinesse 2260
Schal p*er*forme vp þe nombre of his couent
þanne schullen þey knelen do*un* by oon assent
And to eu*er*y spokes ende in þis manere
fful sadly leye his nose schal þe freere 2264
ȝoure noble confessour þere god him saue
Schal holde his nose vpright vnto þe naue
þanne schal þis cherl wiþ bely styf and touȝt
As any tabour hider ben y-brought 2268
And sette him on þe wheel right on þis carte
vpon þe naue and make him lete a farte
And ȝe schuln se vp p*er*il of my lijf
By preof which þat is demonstratif 2272

þat equaly þe soun of hit wole wende
And eeke þe stynke vnto þe spokes ende
Saue þat þis worþi man þis confessour
By cause he is a man of gret honour 2276
Schal haue þe ferste fruytes as resoñ is
þe noble vsage of freres ȝit is þis
þe worþy men of hem schuln first be serued
And certeinly he haþ it wel disserued 2280
he haþ to day taught vs so mochil good
Wiþ preching in þe pulpit þer he stood
þat I may vouche sauf I say for me
ne hadde þe firste smelle of fartes þre 2284
And so wolde alle his couent hardily
he bereþ him so faire and holyly
þe lord þe lady & eche man saue þe ffrere
Sayden þat Iankyn spak in þis matiere 2288
As wel as euclide or protholome
Touchinge þe cherle þey seyden subtilite
And by heyh witte make him speke as he spake
he is no fool ne no demonyake 2292
And Iankyn haþ y-wonne a newe goune [leaf 129, back]
My tale is doon we ben almost at towne

¶ Here endeþ þe Somnours tale

GROUP E. FRAGMENT VI.

§ 1. THE CLERK'S HEAD-LINK.

CORPUS MS.

¶ here bygenneþ þe p*ro*loge of þe clerk of Oxe*n*ford

[*on leaf* 129, *back*]

SIre clerk of Oxenford oure oste sayde
ȝe ryde as stille and coy as doþ a mayde
Were newe spoused sittyng atte bord
This day ne herde I of ȝoure tonge a word 4
I trowe þat ȝe studye aboute som sophime
But Salamon saiþ eu*e*ry þing haþ tyme ¶ Pausac*io*
ffor goddes sake beþ of bettre cheere
It nys no tyme for to stodyen heere 8
Telle vs som mery tale by ȝoure fay
ffor what man þat is entred in-to play
he needes mote vnto þe play assente
But p*re*ches nat as freres don in lente 12
To make vs for oure olde synnes wepe
Ne þat þy tale make vs not to sleepe ¶ Pausac*io*
Telle vs som mery þing of auentures /
ȝoure termes ȝoure coloures ȝoure figures 16
keep hem in store til so be ȝe enditen
by stile as when þat men to kinges writen
Spekeþ so plein at þis tyme I ȝou p*ra*y
þat we may vnderstonde what ȝe say ¶ Pausac*io*
This worþi clerk benignely answerde
Oft q*uod* he I am vnder ȝour ȝerde
ȝe han of vs as now þe gouernance
And þ*er*fore wol I do yow obeissance 24

As fer as resoñ axeþ hardel
I wil ȝou telle a tale which þat I
lernede at paradovse of a worþi clerk
As preued by his wordes and his werk 28
he is now deed and nayled in his cheste
I pray to god to ȝiue his soule reste ¶ Pausacio
ff*ra*unces Petrake þe laureat poete
highte þis clerk whos retoriq*ue* sweete [*a leaf out*] 32
[enlumynede al ytaill*e* / of Poyetrie [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 66
as Lynyan dide / of Philosophie
or lawe / or other arte par-ticulere
but deth̄ that wol not suffre vs / duelle here 36
but as it were / a twynkelyng of an ygh̄e
hem both̄ hath̄ sleyn / *and* alle shulle we dye
but forthe to tellen / of this worthy man
that taugh̄te me this tale / as I bigan 40
I sey that he first / wigh̄t highe stile enditeth̄
er he the body of his tale writeth̄
a proheme / in the which̄ discerneth̄ he
the mounde / *and* of Saluce the contre 44
and spekith̄ of Appenyn the hilles high̄e
that ben the boundes / of west Lumbardie
and of the Mounte Vesulus / in special
where as the Poo / out of a wel smal 48
takith̄ his first spryngyng / *and* his sours
and holte even streighte wey / his cours
to Emel-ward / to Ferrare / *and* to Venyse
the which̄ a longe thing were / to devise 52
and trewely / as to my Iugement
me thinkith̄ it a thing / inp*er*tynent
save he wol conveye / his matiere
but this is the tale / which̄ ye shal hiere 56

Here endith̄ the clerke of Oxonford his prolog

And next folwyng bigynneth his tale of Gresilde.

[MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *on leaf* 66]

Ther was in the weste side of ytaylle
dowñ at the rote / of Vesulus the colde
a lusty playne / habundaunte of vitaylle
where many a toure *and* towne / thow maist biholde 60
that founded were / in tyme of faders olde
and many a-nother / dilectable sighť
and Saluces / this noble contre highť 63

A Marques whilom / was lord of that londe 64
as were his worthi eldres / him bifore
and obeysaunte / ay redy to his honde
were alle his liges / both̄ lesse *and* more [*leaf* 66, *back*] 67
thus in delite he lyved / *and* hath̄ done yore
biloued *and* drad / thorugh̄ favour of fortune
both of his lordis / *and* of his comune 70

¶ Therwith he was / to speken of lynage 71
the gentilest borne / of al Lumbardye
a faire persone *and* strong / *and* yonge of age
and ful of honoure / *and* of curtesie 74
discrete I-nough̄ / his contre for to gye
saue in som thingis / he was to blame
and Walter was this yonge lord-is name 77

¶ I blame him thus / that he considred nought̄e 78
in tyme comyng / what myghte him betide
but on his lust present / was al his thought̄e
as for to havke *and* hounte / on euery side 81
wel nygh̄ al other cures / lete he slide
and eke he nolde / *and* that was worst of alle
wedde no wiff / for aughte that myghte bifalle 84

GROUP E. § 2. CLERK'S TALE. **Corpus MS.**

¶ Oonly that poynt / his peple bare soore [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
that flokmele on a day / they to him wente
and oon of hem / that wysest was of loore
or ellis that the lord / best wolde assente 88
that he shulde telle him / what his peple mente
or ellis coude he wel / shewe suche matire
he to the Marques seide / as ye shulle hire 91

¶ O noble Marques / youre humanite 92
assurith vs / *and* yevith vs hardynesse
as offte as tyme / is of necessite
that we to yow mow telle / oure hevynesse 95
acceptith now lord / of youre gentilnesse
that we with pitevous herte / to yow pleyne
and lete not youre eeris / my voys disdeyne 98

¶ Al haue I nought to don*e* / in this matire 99
more than a-nother man hath / in this place
yit for as meche / as ye my lord / so dere
haue alwey shewed to me / favour*e* *and* grace 102
I dar the better axe of yow / a space [*leaf* 67]
of audience / to shewe oure requeste
and ye my lord / to do right as ye leste 105

¶ For certes lord / so wel vs likith yow 106
and al youre werke / *and* haue don*e* that we] [Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract ends*]
Ne coude nought vs self deuysen how [Corpus MS, *leaf* 130]
We mighte lyue in more felicite 109
Saue o þing lord if it ȝour wille be
That for to be a wedded man ȝou leste
þen were ȝoure peple in sou*er*eyn hertes reste 112

[*No breaks in the Corpus MS between the stanzas.*]

Bowe þ ȝoure nekke vnder þat blisful ȝok 113
Of souerainte and nought of s*er*uise
Which þat men clepe spousaile or wedlok
And þenke þ lord amonges ȝoure þoughtes wise 116

[how that oure dayes pas / in sondre gise] [Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
ffor þough we slepe or wake or renne or ryde
Ay fleeþ þe tyme and wol noman abyde 119

And þoughh ȝoure greene þoughtes floure as ȝit 120
In crepeþ age alway as stille as stoon
And deth manaceþ eu*er*y age and smyt
In ech astat for þer askapeþ noon 123
And also certein as we knowe echoon
þat we schull*e* deye as vncertein we all*e*
Ben of þat day þat deþ schal on vs fall*e* 126

¶ Acceptеþ þanne of vs þe trewe entent 127
þat neuere ȝit ne refused ȝour heste
And we lord if þat ȝe wile assent
To chese ȝou a wijf in schort tyme atte leste 130
Borne of þe gentilest and of þe meste
Of all*e* þis lond so þat it oughte seme
hono*ur* to god and ȝou as we can deme 133

¶ Delyuer vs out of al þis busy dede 134
And tak a wijf for hihe goddes sake
ffor if it so bifelle as god forbede
þat þorughh ȝoure deþ ȝour lynage schulde slake 137
And þat a straunge successour schulde take
ȝoure heritage. o wo were vs on lyue
wherfore we pray ȝow hastily to wyue 140

¶ here meke preyer and here pitous cherte 141
Made þe marquys herte haue pite
[ye wol quod he / myn owne peple dere] [Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
To þat I neuer erst þouȝte streyne me 144
I me reioysed of my liberte
That selden tyme is founden mariage [leaf 130, back]
Ther I was free I moste be in se*r*uage 147

¶ But' naþeles I se ȝour trewe entente 148
And truste vpon ȝour witte and haue don ay
Wherfore with al my fre wille I wil assente
To wedde me as sone as euer I may 151
But' þer as ȝe han profred me to day
To chese me a wijf' I ȝou relesse
þat' choys and pray ȝou of' ȝoure profre cesse 154

¶ ffor I wot þat' children often ben 155
vnlike here eldres hem byfore
Bounte comþ al of' god not' of' þe stren
Of' which þei beþ engendred and y-bore 158
I truste in goddes bounte and þ*er*fore
my mariage and my*n* astat' and reste
I him bitake he may do as him leste 161

¶ lat' me alone in chesyng' of' my wijf' 162
But' I ȝou p*ray* and charge vpon ȝour lijf'
That' charge vpon my bak' I wil endure
þat' what' wijf' I take I þe assure 165
To worschipe hire whil þat' hire lijf' may dure
In word in werk' boþe heere and eu*er*ywhere
As sche an Emp*er*oures doughter were 168

¶ And forþ*er*more þis schal ȝe swere þat' ȝe 169
Aȝein my choys schulle neuer grucche ne stryue
ffor siþþe I schal forgo my liberte
At' ȝoure request' as euer mote I þriue 172
[there as myn herte is sett / there woH I wyve] [Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
And but' ȝe wol assente in such manere
I p*ray* ȝou speke nomore of' þis matiere 175

¶ Wiþ hertly wil þey sweren and assenten 176
To al þis þing' þer seyde no wight' nay
Beseking' him of' grace or þat' þei wenten
þat' he wolde graunten hem a certein day 179

Of his spousaile as sone as euer he may
ffor ȝet alway þe poeple somwhat dredde
lest þat þis marquys no wijf wolde wedde 182

He g*ra*unted hem a day such as him leste [leaf 131] 183
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly
And sayde he dide al þis at þair requeste
And þay wiþ humble entent ful buxomly 186
knelyng vpon here knees ful reuerently
him þonkyng alle and þus þay haue an ende
Of here entent and home aȝein þei wende 189

And her vpon he to his officers 190
Comandeþ for þe feste to purveye
And to his priue knightes and squyers
Such charge ȝaf as him list on hem leye 193
And þay to his comaundeme*n*t obeye
And ech of hem doþ al his diligence
To do vnto þe feste reuerence 196

[*PART II.*]

¶ P*ri*ma p*ar*s

NOught fer fro þe paleys honurable 197
Wher as þe marquys schop his mariage
Ther stood a throop of þe Cite delitable
In which þat pore folk of þat village 200
hadden here bestes and here herbergage
And of here labour toke here sustienance
After þe erþe ȝaf hem abundañce 203

Among þis pore folk þer dwelled a man 204
Which was holde pouerest of hem alle
But heihe god sum tyme sende can
his g*ra*ce in to a litel oxe stalle 207
Ianicula men of þat throop him calle
A doughter hadde he fair ynough to sight
¶ And Grisildis þis ȝonge mayden highte 210

But for to speke of verteuous beaute 211
þanne was sche on þe fairest vnder sonne
fful pouerely y-fostered was sche
No likerous lust was in hire herte ronne 214
Wel oftere of þe welle þan of þe tonne
Sche drank for sche wolde vertues plese
Sche knew wel labour but non ydel ese 217

¶ But þoughh þis mayden tendre were of age 218
ȝet in þe brest of hire virginite [leaf 131, back]
Ther was y-closed rype and scharpe corage
And in a gret reuerence and charite 221
hire olde pouere fader fostred sche
A fewe scheep spynnyng on feld sche kepte
Sche nolde not ben ydel til þat sche slepte 224

And whan sche com homward sche wolde bringe 225
Wortes or oþer herbes tymes ofte
The which sche schredde and seth for hir lyuynge
And made hir bed ful harde and no þing softe / 228
And ay sche kepte hir faderes lif on lofte
Wiþ euery obeissance and diligence
That childe may do to faderes reuerence / 231

¶ vpon Grisilde þe pouer creature 232
fful ofte siþe þe marquys sette his ye
As he on huntyng rood perauenture
And whan it fell þat he might hir aspye 235
he not wiþ wantoun lokyng of folye
his eyen caste on hire but in sad wyse
vpon hir cheere he wolde him ofte auyse 238

¶ Commendyng in his herte hir wommanhede 239
And eek hire vertu passyng any wighht
Of so ȝong age as wel in cheere as in dede
ffor þough þe poeple haue no gret insighht 242

In vertu he considerd ful rigħt
hir bounte and disposed þat he wolde
Wedde hir oonly if euer he wedde scholde 245

The day of weddyng com but no wigħt can 246
Telle what womman þat it schulde be
ffor which meruayle wondreþ many man
And seyde whan þey were in pryuyte 249
Wil nat oure lord ȝit leue his vanite
Wil he nat wedde allas allas þe while
Why wol he þus himself and vs begile 252

But naþeles þis marquys haþ don make 253
Of gemmes sette in golde and in asure
Broches and rynges for Grisildes sake [leaf 132]
And of hire cloþing tok he þe mesure 256
Of a mayden like to hire stature
And eek of oþer ornamentes alle
That vnto such a weddyng schulde falle 259

¶ þe tyme of vnderne of þe same day 260
Approcheþ þat þis weddyng schulde be
And al þe paleys but was in aray
Boþe halle and chambre eche in his degre 263
houses of offices stuffed wiþ plente
Ther maystow se of deynteuous vitayle
That may be founde as feer as last ytayle 266

¶ This real marquys richely arrayed 267
lordes and ladyes in his companye
The which vnto þe feste were prayed
And of his retenue þe bachelrie 270
With many a soun of sondry melodye
vnto þe vilage of which I tolde
In þis array þe righte wey haþ holde 273

¶ Grisilde of þis god wot ful Innocent 274
þat for hire schapen al þis array was
To fecche water at a welle is wente
And comeþ home as sone as euer sche may 277
ffor wel sche hadde herd seyde þat ilke day
That marquys schulde wedde and if sche might
Sche wolde fayn han seyn some of þat sight 280

¶ Sche þought I wille wiþ oþre maydens stonde 281
þat ben my felawes in oure dore and se
The marquisesse and *þer*fore wol I fonde
To do at home as sone as it may be 284
þe labour which þat longeþ vnto me
And þanne I may at leysyr hire by-holde
If sche þis wey vnto þe castel holde 287

¶ And as sche wolde ouer hire presshfold gon 288
The marquys cam and gan hir for to calle
And sche sette doun hir water potte anon ·
Bysyde þis presshfolde of þis oxe stalle [leaf 132, back] 291
And doun vpon hir knees sche gan to falle
Wiþ sad contynañce and kneleþ stille
Til sche had herd what was þe lordes wille 294

þis þoughtful marquys spak vnto þis mayde 295
fful soberly and seyde in þis manere
Wher is ȝour fader Grisildis he sayde
And sche wiþ reuerence in humble chere 298
Answerde lord he is al redy heere
And in sche goþ wiþoute lenger lette
And to þe marquys hir fader sche fette 301

¶ he by þe hond þan took þis olde man/ 302
And sayde þus whan he him hadde a syde
Ianycala I neyþer may ne can
lengere þe plesaunce of myn herte hyde 305

GROUP E. § 2. CLERK'S TALE. **Corpus MS.**

If þat þou vouche saff what so betyde
þy doughter I wol take or þat I wende
As for my wijf vnto hire lyues ende 308

¶ þou louest me I wot it wel certain 309
And art my feiþful liege man y-bore
And al þat likeþ me I dar wel sayn
It likeþ þe and specialliche *per*fore 312
Telle me þat poynt as I haue sayd bifore
If þat þou wilt vnto þat purpos drawe
To take me as for þi sone in lawe 315

¶ The sodeyn cas þe man astoned so 316
þat reed he wax abayst and al quakynge
he stood vnneþe he sayde worde no mo
But only þus lord q*uod* he my willynge 319
Is as ȝe wille nought aȝeins ȝour likynge
I wole noþing ȝe be my lord so dere
But as ȝou luste gouerneþ þis matiere 322

¶ ȝit wol I quod þis marquys softely 323
þat in þi chambre I and þou and sche
haue a collacion and wostow why
ffor I wil axe if þat hire wille be 326
To be my wijf and reule hire after me [leaf 133]
And al þis schal be doon in þi p*re*sence
I wol not speke out of þin audience 329

¶ And in here chambre whil þay were aboute 330
here tretees which þat ȝe schul after heere
þe poeple cam in to þe hous wiþoute
And wondred hem in hor honeste manere 333
And tentyfly sche kepte hir fader deere
But outerly Grysildis wondre might
ffor neuer erst ne saugh sche such a sight 336

¶ No wonder is þouȝ þat sche were astoned 337
To se so gret a geste in þat place
Sche neuer was to suche gestes woned
ffor which sche loked wiþ ful pale face 340
But schortly forþ þis mater for to chace
This aren þe wordes þat þe marquys sayde
To his benigne verray feyþful mayde 343

¶ Grisilde he seyde ȝe schule wel vnderstonde 344
It likeþ to ȝoure fader and to me
That I ȝou wedde and eek it may so stonde
As I suppose ȝe wil þat it so be 347
But þese demaundes ax I first q*uod* he
¶ þat siþþen it schal be don in hasty wise
Wille ȝe assente or elles ȝou auyse 350

I seye þis be redy wiþ good herte 351
To al my lust and þat I frely may
As me best þinkeþ do ȝou knowe or smerte
And neuer þe to grucche it night ne day 354
And eek whan I say ȝe ne say not nay
Neiþ*er* by word ne by frounyng contynance
Swere þis and heer I swere oure alliance 357

¶ Weddyng vpon þis word quakyng for drede 358
Sche sayde lord vndigne or vnworþy
Am I to þat ilke hono*ur* þat ȝe me bede
But as ȝe wille ȝoure self right so wol I 361
And here I swere þat neuer willyngly
In werk ne þought I nyl ȝou disobeye [leaf 133, back]
ffor to be deed þough me were loþ to deye 364

¶ This is ynough Grisylde myn q*uod* he 365
And forþ he goþ wiþ a ful sobre cheere
Out at þe dore and after þat cam sche
And to þe poeple he sayde in þis manere 368

þis is my wyf quod he þat stondeþ heere
honoureþ hire and loueþ eek I preye
Who so me loueþ þer is no more to seye 371

And for þat noþing of hir olde gere 372
Sche scholde bringe in to his hous he bad
That wommen schulde dispoylen hire right þere
Of which þis ladyes were noþing glad 375
To handle hire cloþes wher Inne sche was clad
But naþeles þis mayden bright of hewe
ffro foot to heed þey cloþed han al newe 378

¶ hire heres han þey kempte þat layn vntressed 379
fful rudely and wiþ hire fyngres smale
þay tyred hire heed þat longe rudely lay dressed
Of hire array what schulde I make a tale 382
Sche is now fair of hew þat arst was pale
vnneþe þe poeple hir knew for hir fairnesse
Whan sche transmewed was in such richesse 385

¶ This marquys haþ hir wedded wiþ a ryng 386
Brouȝt for þe same cause and hire sette
vpon an hors snow whyt and wel amblyng
And to þe paleys or he lenger lette 389
Wiþ ioyful poeple þat hire ladde and mette
Conueyed hire and þus þe day þay spende
In reuel til þe sonne gan descende 392

¶ And schortly forþ þis tale for to chace 393
I seye þat to þis newe marquysesse
God haþ such fauour sent hire of his grace
That it ne semed nought be kykenesse 396
That sche was born and fedde in rudenesse
As in a cote or in an Oxe stalle/
But norisshed in an emperoures halle [leaf 134] 399

¶ To eu*er*y wigħt sche woxen is so deere 400
And worschipful þat folk þer sche was bore
And from hire burþe knewe hire þere by ȝeere
vnneþe trowede þey but durst han swore 403
þat to Ianicle of which I spak byfore
Sche doughter nas for as by coueiture
hem þoughte sche was anoþer creature 406

¶ ffor þough euere vertuous was sche 407
Sche was encressed in such excellence
Of þewes good y-sette in heih bounte
And so discrete and fair of eloquence
So benigne and digne of reu*er*ence
And coude so þe poeples herte embrace
þat ech hir loueþ þat lokeþ on hir face 413

¶ Not only of salues in þe toun 414
Pirplissched was þe bounte of hir name
But eek besyde in many a regioñ
If on sayde wel anoþ*er* sayde þe same 417
So spredeþ of hire heih bounte & fame
That men and wo*m*men als wel ȝonge as olde
Gon to salice vpon hir to byholde 420

¶ Thus Walter lowly nat but really 421
Wedded wiþ fortunate honeste
In goddes pees lyueþ ful esily
At hom and outward grace ynoughħ hadde he 424
And for he saughħ þat vnder loughħ degre
Was ofte vertu hyd þe poeple him helde
A prudent man and þat is seyn ful seelde 427

¶ Nat oonly þis Grisildis þurghħ hir witte 428
Coude al þe fait of wyfly homlynesse
But eke whan þat þe cas requyred it
The comun p*r*ofyt coude sche redresse 431

þer nas discorde rancour ne heuynesse
In al þat lond þat sche couþe appese
And wisly bringe hem alle in hertes eese 434

¶ Though þat hire housbonde absent were anon [leaf 134, back]
If gentil men or oþer of hire countre /
Were wroþe sche wolde bringen hem at on
So wys and rype wordes hadde sche / 438
And Iuggements of so gret equite
þat sche from heuen sent was as men wende
þe poeple to plese and euery wrong to amende 441

¶ Nat long tyme after þat þis Grisilde 442
Was wedded sche a douȝter haþ y-bore
Al hadde hir leuer haue born a knaue childe
Glad was þis marquys and his folk *per*fore 445
ffor þoughh a mayden childe come al bifore
Sche may vnto a knaue child atteyne
Be lykened siþþe sche is not bareyne 448

¶ Explic*it* ij^a p*ars*.

Ther felle as it bifalleþ tymes mo 449
When þat þis childe had souked but a þrowe
This marquys in his herte longeþ so
To tempte his wyf hir sadnesse for to knowe 452
þat he ne mighte out of his herte þrowe
¶ This merueylous desir his wijf to assaye
Needeles god wot he þought hir to affraye 455

he hadde assayed hire ynoughh bifore 456
And fond hir euer good what needed it
hire for to tempte and alway more and more
But as for me I seye þat euele it sitte 459
þough some men it preyse for a subtil witte
To assaye a wijf whan þat it is no neede
And putten hire in anguissche and in dreede 462

¶ ffor which þis marquys wrought in þis manere 463
he com a night allone þer as sche lay
Wiþ sterne fate and wiþ trouble cheere
And seyde þus Grisilde q*uod* he þat day 466
þat I ȝou took out of ȝoure pore aray
And putte ȝou in astat of heye noblesse
ȝe haue nouȝt forgeten as I gesse 469

¶ I seye Grisilde þis p*re*sent dignite 470
In which I haue putte ȝow as I trowe [leaf 135]
makeþ ȝou nouȝt forȝeteful for to be
þat I ȝou took in pouer astate ful lowe 473
ffor eny wele ȝe mote ȝoure selue knowe
Tak heed of eu*er*y word þat I ȝou say
þer nys no wight þat heereþ it but we tway 476

¶ ȝe wote ȝoure selue wel how þat ȝe come here 477
In to þis hous þat nys nat longe ago
And þough to me ȝe be right leeue and deere
vnto my gentiles ȝe ben noþing so 480
þey say to hem it is gret schame and wo
ffor to be sogette and ben in seruage
To þe þat art born of a smal vilage 483

¶ And namely siþþe þy douȝt*er* was y-bore 484
This wordes han þey spoke douteles
But I desire as I haue don byfore
To lyue my lyf wiþ hem in reste and pees 487
I may not in þis cas be recheles
I mot do wiþ þi douȝt*er* for þe beste
Nouȝt as I wolde but as my gentils leste 490

¶ And ȝit god wot þis is ful loþ to me 491
But naþeles wiþouten ȝour wetynge
I wil nat do but þis wil I q*uod* he
That ȝe to me assent/ as in þis þinge 494

Schewe now ȝour pacience as in werkynge
þat ȝe me hight and swor in ȝour village
That day þat maked was our mariage 497

¶ Whan sche had herd al þis sche nat ameued 498
Noyþer in word ne cheere ne contynañce
ffor as it semed sche was nat agreued
Sche sayde lord al liþ in ȝour plesaunce 501
My childe and I wiþ hertely obeissance
ben ȝoures al and ȝe mowe saue & spille
ȝoure owne þing workiþ after ȝour wille 504

¶ Ther may no þing so god my soule saue 505
liken to ȝou þat may displesen me
Ne I desyre noþing for to haue [leaf 135, back]
Ne drede for to lese saue oonly þe 508
þis wille is in my*n* herte and ay schal be
No lengþe of tyme or deþ may þis deface
Ne chaunge my corrage to anoþ*er* place 511

¶ Glad was þis marquys for hire answeryng 512
But ȝit he feigned as it were not so
Al dreery was his cheer as his lokyng
Whan þat he schulde out/ of þe chambre go 515
Sone after þis a forlong way or tuo
he priuely haþ tolde al his entente
vnto a man and to his wijf him sente 518

¶ A maner s*er*geant was þis priue man 519
The which he feiþful often founden hadde
In þinges gret and eek such folk wel can
Don execucioñ of þinges badde 522
The lord knew wel þat he him loued and dradde
And whan þis s*er*gaunt knew his lordes wille
In to þe chambur he stalked him ful stille 525

¶ Ma dame he sayde ȝe moote forȝiue it me 526
Though I do þing' þe which I am constreyned
ȝe ben so wys þat' ful wel knowe ȝe
þat' lordes heestes mowe not' be feyned 529
þey mowe wel be weyled or co*m*pleyned
But' men moot' needes to here lust' obeye
And so wol I þer nys nomore to seye 532

¶ þis child am I comaunded for to take 533
And spak' no more but' out' þe childe he hente
Dispitously and gan a cheere make
As þough he wold han slayn it' or he wente 536
Grisildes mot' al soffre and consente
And as a lombe sche sitteþ meke & stille
And lete þis cruel s*er*gant' han his wille 539

¶ Suspeccious was þe defame of' þis man 540
Suspecte his face suspecte his word also
Suspecte þe tyme in which he þis bygan.
Allas hir doughter þat sche loued so [leaf 136] 543
Sche wende he wolde haue slayen it' right' þo
But' naþeles sche nouþer weep ne siked
Conformyng' hire to þat' þe marquys liked 546

¶ But' atte laste speke sche bigan 547
And mekely sche to þe s*er*gaunt' preyed
So as he was a worþy gentil man
þat' sche moste kisse hir childe or þat' it' deyde 550
And in hir barm þis litel child sche leyde
Wiþ ful sadde face and gan þis childe to blisse
And lulled it' and after gan it' kisse 553

¶ And þus sche seyde in hire benigne vois 554
ffar wel my child I schal þe neuer se
But' siþ I haue þe marked wiþ þe croys
Of' þilke fader blessed mote þou be 557

þat for vs deyed vpon a crosse of tre
þy soule litel child I him bytake
ffor þis night schalt þou deye for my sake 560

¶ I trowe to a norice in þis cas 561
It hadde ben hard þis reuþe for to se
Wel might a mooder þan han cryed allas
But naþeles so sadde stedefast was sche 564
þat sche endured alle aduersite
And to þe sergeaunt mekely sche sayde
haue her azein zour litel zonge mayde 567

¶ Goþ now quod sche and doþ my lordes heste 568
But o þing wold I pray zou of zour grace
þat but my lord forbad zou atte leste
Burieþ þis litel body in som place 571
þat bestes ne no briddes it to-race
But he ne wolde no word to þe purpos seye
But/ tok þe childe and went vpon his weye 574

¶ þis sergaunt cam vnto þis lord ageyne 575
And of Grisildes wordes and hir cheere
he tolde him word for word in schort and pleyne
And him presenteþ with his douzter dere 578
Somwhat þis lord hadde reuþe in his manere [leaf 136, back]
But naþeles his purpos held he stille
As lordes don whan þay wol haue here wille 581

And bad þis sergaunt þat he priuyly 582
Schulde þis child ful ofte wynde and wrappe
Wiþ alle circumstaunces tendrely
And carye it in a coffre or in a lappe 585
But vpon peyne his heed of for to swappe
þat noman schulde knowe of his entent
Ne when he come ne whider þat he went 588

¶ But at Boloigne it to his suster deere 589
That ilke time of Panyke was Countesse /
he schulde it take and schewe hir þis mateere /
Besekyng hire to don hire besynesse 592
This child to fostre in alle gentilnesse
And whos child þat it was he bad hire hyde
ffrom euery wight for ought þat may betyde 595

¶ þis sergaunt goþ and haþ fulfild þis þing 596
But now to þis markys retorne we
ffor now goþ he ful ofte ymagynyng
If by his wyffes cheer he mighte se 599
Or by hire word apparceyue þat sche
Were chaunged but he neuer coude hir fynde
But euer in oon ylike sad and kynde 602

¶ As glad as besy as humble in seruice 603
And eek in loue as sche was wont to be
Was sche to him in euery maner wyse
Ne of hir doughter nought a word spak sche 606
Accident for non aduersite
Was seyn in hire ne neuer hir douȝter name
Ne nempned sche in ernest ne in game 609

¶ Explicit iij^a pars.

IN þis astat þer ben passed .iiij. ȝer 610
sche wiþ childe was but as god wolde
A knaue childe sche bar by þis walter
fful gracious and fair for to biholde 613
And whan þat folk it to his fader tolde
Nat onlich he but al þe coñtre merye [leaf 137]
Was for þis child and god þey þank and herye 616

¶ Whan it was tuo ȝeer old and fro be breste 617
Departed of his norice on a day
This marquys caughte ȝit anoþer leste

To tempte his wijf' ȝit' ofter if' he may 620
O nedeles was sche tempted in assay
But' wedded men knowen no mesure
Whan þat' þay fynde a pacient creature 623

¶ Wijf' q*uod* þis marquys ȝe han herd of' þis 624
My poeple sekerly bereþ heuy of' oure mariage
And namely siþþe my sone boren is
Now is it' wers þan euer in al oure age 627
The murmur sleþ myn herte and my corage
ffor to myn eeres comeþ þe voys so smerte
That' it' wel neih destroyed haþ myn herte 630

¶ Now sey þey þus whan walter is agon 631
þanne schal þe blood of' Ianicle succede
And ben oure lord for oþer haue we non
Suche wordes seiþ my poeple it is no drede 634
Wel ought' I of' such murmur taken heede
ffor certeinly I drede such sentence
þough þey nought' pleyne speke in my*n* audience 637

¶ I wolde lyue in pees if' þat' I mighte 638
Wher fore I am disposed outerly
As I his suster seruede be nighte
Right' so þenke I to serue him priuely 641
þus warne I ȝou for ȝe nouȝt' sodeinly
Out' of' ȝour self' for no wo schulde outraye
Beþ pacient' and þ*er*fore I ȝou praye 644

¶ I haue q*uod* sche sayd þus and euer schal 645
I wille no þing' ne nyl no þing' certayne
But' as ȝou liste nouȝt' greueþ me al
þough þat' my doughter and my sone be slayne 648
At' ȝour comaundeme*n*t' þis is to sayne
I haue nouȝt' had no part' of' children tweyne
But' first' siknesse and after wo and peyne [leaf 137, back] 651

¶ ȝe ben oure lord doþ wiþ ȝour owne þing' 652
Riȝt' as ȝou liste askeþ no rede at me
ffor as I lifte at' home al my cloþinge
Whan I first' come to ȝou right' so q*uod* sche 655
lefte I my wille and al my liberte
And tok' ȝour cloþing' wherfore I ȝou p*re*ye
Doþ ȝour plesañce I wil ȝour lust' obeye 658

¶ And certes if' I hadde p*re*science 659
ȝoure wille to knowe or ȝe ȝour lust' me tolde
I wolde it' do wiþouten necligence
But' now I wot' ȝour lust' and what' ȝe wolde 662
Al ȝour plesaunce ferme and stable I holde
ffor wiste I þat' my deþ wolde do ȝou ese
Right' gladly wolde I deye ȝou to plese 665

¶ Deþ may not' make no comp*ar*iso*un* 666
vnto oure loue and whan þis marquys say
þe contenaunce of' his wijf' he cast a do*un*
his eyȝen tuo and wondreþ þat' sche may 669
In pacience suffre al þis array
And forþ he goþ wiþ drery contynaunce
But' to his herte it was right' gret' plesañce 672

¶ þis Oggel s*er*gaunt' in þe same wise 673
þat' he hir douȝt*er* caughte right' so he
Or worse if' men worse can deuyse
haþ hent' hir sone þat' ful was of' beaute 676
And euer in oon so pacient was sche
That' sche no cheere made of' heuynesse
But' kiste hir sone and after gan it' blesse 679

¶ Saue þis sche p*re*yed him if' þat' he mighte 680
hir litel sone he wolde in erþe graue
his tendre lymes delicat' to sight'
ffro foules and fro bestes for to saue 683

but sche non answer of him mighte haue
he wente his wey as he no þing ne roughte
But to Boloigne he tendrely it brouȝte 686

¶ This marquys wondreþ euer lenger þe more [leaf 138] 687
vpon hir pacience and if þat he
Ne hadde soþly knowe þer bifore
þat parfitly hir children loued sche 690
he wolde haue wende þat of som subtilte
And of malice or for cruel corrage
That sche hadde suffred þis wiþ sad visage 693

¶ But wel he knewe next himself certayne 694
Sche loued hir children best in euery wise /
But now of wommen wolde I aske fayne
If þise assayes mighte nouȝt suffise / 697
What couþe a stordy housbonde more deuyse
To proeue his wijf and hire stedfastnesse
And he contynuyng euer in sturdynesse 700

¶ But þer ben folk of such condicion̄ 701
That whan þey haue a certein purpos take
They can nought stynte of here entencion̄
But right as þey were bounden to a stake 704
þey wil nat of þat firste purpos slake /
Right̄ so þis marquys fully haþ purposed
To tempte his wijf as he was first disposed 707

¶ he wayteþ if by word or contynance 708
That sche to him was chaunged of corage
But neuer coude he fynde variance
Sche was ay oon in hert and in visage 711
And ay þe furþer þat sche was in age
þe more trewe if þat it were possible
Sche was to him more lowe and more pesible 714

¶ ffor which it semed þus þat of hem tuo 715
þer nas but oo wille for as walter liste
That same lust was hire plesance also
And god he þanked al fel for þe beste 718
Sche schewed weel for no worldly vnreste
A wijf as of hir self no þing ne scholde
Wille in effecte but as hir housbond wolde 721

þe sclaundre of walter ofte and wyde spradde 722
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly [leaf 138, back]
ffor he a pore wo*m*man wedded hadde
haþ murdred boþe his children priuely 725
Such murmur was among hem comunly
No wonder is for to þe poeples eere
Ther com no word but þat þay mordred were 728

ffor which þer as his poeple þer bifore 729
hadde loued him wel þe sclaunder of his diffame
Made hem þat þey him hatede þ*er*fore
To ben a murdrer is an hateful name 732
But naþeles for ernest ne for game
he of his cruel purpos nolde stente
To tempte his wijf was sette al his entente 735

¶ Whan þat his douȝter twelf ȝer was of age 736
he to þe court of Rome in subtil wise
Enformed of his wille and sente his message
Comaundyng hem suche bulles to deuyse/ 739
In þis maner and in þis same gyse
how þat þe pope as for his poeples reste
Bad him to wedde anoþ*er* if him leste 742

¶ I say he bad þay scholden countrefete 743
The popes bulles making mencioñ
þat he haþ leue his firste wijf to lete
As by þe popes dispensacioñ 746

To stynte rancour and discencioñ
Bitwixe his poeple and him þus spak' þe bulle
þe which þey han publisshed atte fulle 749

¶ The rude poeple as it' no wonder is 750
Wenden ful wel þat' it hadde be riȝt' so
But' whan þis tyþinges come to Grisildis
I deme þat' hir herte was ful wo 753
And sche ylike sad for euermo
Disposed was þis humble creature
To aduersite of' fortune al tendure 756

¶ Abydyng' euer his lust' and his plesañce 757
To whom sche was ȝiuen herte and al
As to hire worldly verray suffisaunce [leaf 139]
But' schortly if' þis story telle I schal 760
This marquys writen haþ in special
A lettre in which he schewe þ his entente
And secretly he to boloigne it' sente 763

¶ To þe erl of' Panyke which þat' hadde þo 764
Wedded his suster preyed he specially
To bringen home aȝein his children tuo
But' he o þinge preyed outrely 767
With alle his herte ful affectuously
þat' he to no wight þough men wolde enquere
Schulde nought telle whos children þat' þei were 770

¶ But' seye þe mayden schulde y-wedded be 771
Vnto þe marquys of' Saluce right' anon
And as þis erle was preyed right' so dede he
ffor at' day sette he on his day is goon 774
Toward Saluce and lordes many oon
In riche array þis mayden for to gyde
hire ȝonge broþer ryding' by hir syde 777

Arrayed was toward hir mariage 778
This freisshe mayde ful of gemmes cleere
hir broþer which þat vij. ȝeer was of age
Arrayed eek ful freissch in his manere 781
And þus in gret noblesse and wiþ glad cheere
Toward Saluces schapynge hire iourneye
ffro day to day þey ryden in here weye 784

¶ Quarta pars.

[*PART V.*]

AMong al þis after his wicked vsage 785
þis marquys ȝit his wijf gan tempte more
To þe outrest proef of hire corage
ffully to han exper*i*ment and lore 788
If þat sche was as stidefast as bifore
he on a day in open audience
fful boustously haþ seid hir þis sentence 791

Certes Grisildis I hadde ynough plesaunce 792
To han ȝou to my wijf for ȝour goodnesse
As for ȝour trouþe and ȝour obeissañce
Nat for ȝour lignage ne for ȝour richesse [leaf 139, back] 795
But now q*uod* he in verray soþfastnesse
þat in gret lorschipe if I wol auyse
þer is gret seruytute in sondry wise 798

¶ I may not do as eu*e*ry ploughman may 799
My poeple me constreyneþ for to take
anoþer wijf and cryen day by day
And eek þe pope rancour for to slake 802
Consenteþ it þat dar I vndertake
And trewelich þus meche I wil ȝou seye
My newe wijf is comynge by þe weye 805

¶ Be strong of herte and voyde anon hire place 806
And þilke doware þat ȝe broughten me
Tak it ażein and gr*a*unte it of my grace

Retorneþ to ȝour fadres hous q*uod* he 809
No man may alwey haue prosp*er*ite
Wiþ euene herte I rede ȝou tendur*e*
þe strok' of' fortune or of' auenture 812

¶ And sche aȝein answerde in pacience 813
My lord seyde sche I wot' & wiste alway
how þat' bitwixe ȝoure magnificence
And my pouerte no wight' can ne may 816
maken comparisoñ it/ is no nay
I helde me neuer digne in no manere
To be ȝour wijf' ne ȝit' ȝour chamberere 819

And in þis hous þer ȝe me lady made 820
¶ þe hihe god take I for my witnesse
And also wisly he my soule glade
I neuer heelde me lady ne maystresse 823
But' humble s*er*uaunt' to ȝour worþinesse
And euere schal whil þat' my lijff' may dure
Abouen euery worldly creature 826

¶ That' ȝe so longe of' ȝoure benignite 827
han holde me in honour and nobleye
Wher as I was nouȝt' worþy for to be
þat' þanke I god and ȝow whom I preye 830
fforȝelde it' ȝow þer nys no more to seye [leaf 140]
vnto my fader gladly wol I wende
And wiþ him dwelle vnto my lyues ende 833

¶ Ther I was fostred of' a child ful smal 834
Til I be dede my lijf' þer wil I lede
A wydewe clene in body herte and al
ffor siþþe I ȝaf' to ȝow my maydenhede 837
And am ȝour trewe wijf' it' is no drede
God schilde such a lordes wijf' to take
Anoþer man to housbonde or to make 840

¶ And of ȝoure newe wyf god of his grace 841
So graunte ȝou wele and heigh *prosperite*
ffor I wille gladly ȝelden hire my place
In which I was blisful wont to be 844
ffor siþþe it likeþ ȝow my lord q*uod* sche
That whilom weren al myn hertes reste
þat I schal go I wol go whan ȝou leste 847

¶ But þer as ȝe me profre swich dowayre 848
Ay I first brought it is wel in my mynde
It were my wrecched cloþes no þing fayre
The whiche to me were now ful hard to fynde 851
O goode god how gentil and how kynde
ȝe semede by ȝour speche and ȝour visage
þe day þat maked was our mariage 854

But soþ is seyde algate I fynde it trewe 855
ffor in effecte it preuede is on me
loue is nat olde as whan þat it is newe
But certes lord for non aduersite 858
To deyen in þe cas it schal not be
þat euer in word or werk I schal repente
þat I ȝou ȝaf myn herte in hol entente 861

¶ My lord ȝe wot þat in my fadres place 862
ȝe dede me strepe out of my pore wede
And richely me cladden of ȝour grace
To ȝou brought I nouȝt elles out of drede 865
But feiþ and nakednesse and maydenhede
And here aȝein ȝour cloþing I restore [leaf 140, back]
And eek ȝour weddyng ryng for euermore 868

¶ The remenaunt of ȝoure Iewellis redy be 869
Wiþinne ȝour chambre dar I sauely sayn
Naked out of my fadres hous q*uod* sche
I cam and naked I mot agayn 872

Al ȝoure plesaunce wolde I folwe fayn
But ȝit I hope it be nat ȝoure entente
That smokles out of ȝoure paleys I wente 875

¶ ȝe coude nouȝt do so dishoneste a þing 876
That þilke wombe in which ȝour children leye
Schulde bifore þe poeple in my walkyng
Be seyn al bare wher fore I ȝou preye / 879
lat me not lik a worme go by þe weye
Remembre ȝou myn owne lord so deere
I was ȝoure wijf þough I vnworþy were 882

Wherfore in guerdon of my maydenhede 883
Which þat I brought and not awey I bere
As vouchep sauf to ȝif me to my mede
But such a smok as I was wont to were 886
þat I þer wiþ may wrye þe wombe of here
þat was ȝour wijf and here take I my leue
Of ȝou myn owen lord lest I ȝou greue 889

¶ The smok/ q*uod* he þat þou hast on þi bak 890
lat it be stille and bere it forþ wiþ þe
But vnneþes þilke word he spak
But wente his wey for rewþe and pite 893
Biforn þe folk hir seluen strepeþ sche
And in hire smok wiþ heued and foot al bare
Toward hir fader hous is sche fare 896

The folk hir folwen wepyng in hire weye 897
And fortune ay þey cursen as þey gon
But sche fro weepyng kepte hire eyhen dreye
Ne in þis tyme word ne spak sche noon 900
hire fader þat þis tydinge herde anon
Curseþ þe day and tyme þat nature
Schope him to be a lyues creature [leaf 141] 903

¶ ffor out' of' doute þis olde pouere man 904
þat' whan þe lord had fulfilde his corage 906
ffor euer it demed siþ it' ferst' bigan 905
him wolde þinke it' were disparage 907
To wedde oon of' so pore a lynage
To his astat' so lowe to alighte
And voyde hire as sone as euer he mighte 910

¶ Azein his doughter hastely goþ he 911
ffor he by noyse of' folk' knew hire comyng'
And wiþ hire olde cote as it' mighte be
he couered hire ful sorwfully wepynge 914
But' on hir body might' he it not' bringe
ffor rude was þe cloþ and more of' age
By fele dayes þan was hire mariage 917

Thus wiþ hir fader for a certein space 918
Dwelleþ þis flour of' wyfly pacience
þat' neyþer by hir wordes ne hir face
Biforn þe folk' ne eek' in here absence / 921
Ne schewede sche þat' hire was don offence
Ne of' hire heih astat' þe remembrance
Ne hadde sche as by hire contynaunce 924

No wonder is for in hire gret' astate 925
hire gost' was euer in plein humilite
No tendre mouþ non herte delicate
No pompe ne semblañt' of' realte 928
But' ful of' pacience and benignite
Discrete and prydeles ay honorable
And to hir housbonde euer meeke and stable 931

¶ Men speke of' Iob. and most' for his humblesse 932
As clerkes whan hem liste can endite
Namly of' men but as in soþfastnesse
þough clerkes preyse wommen but a lite 935

þer can no man in humblesse him aquite
As wo*m*men can ne can be half' so trewe
As wo*m*men ben but' it' be falle of' newe 938

[*PART VI.*]

¶ ffro Boloigne is þis erl of' Panyke come / [leaf 141, back]
Of which þe fame vp sprong' to more & lesse /
And to þe poeples eres all*e* and some /
Was couþ eek' þat' a newe marquysesse 942
he wiþ him brought' in such pompe and richesse
That' neuer was þer seyn wiþ mannes eye
So noble array in al west' lumbardye 945

¶ The marquys which þat' schope and knew al þis 946
Or þat' þis erl were come sent' his message
ffor þilke sely pore Grisildis
And sche with humble herte and glad visage 949
nouȝt' wiþ no swollen herte in hire corage
Cam at' his heste and on hir knees hir sette
And reue*r*ently and wysly sche him grette 952

¶ Grisildis q*uod* he my wille is vtterly 953
þis mayden þat' schal be wedded to me
Receyued be to morn als really
As possible is in my*n* hous for to be 956
And eke þat' eu*er*y wight' in his degre
haue his astat' in sittyng' and seruise
And heih plesaunce as I can best' deuyse 959

¶ I haue no wo*m*ma*n* sufficaunt' certayn 960
þe chambres for to arraye in ordinañce
After my lust' and þerfore wolde I fayn
Thyn were al such maner gou*er*nance 963
þou knowest' eek' of' olde al my plesaunce
þough þin array be badde and yuel beseye
Do þou þi deuer atte leste weye 966

¶ Nat oonly lord þat I am glad q*uod* sche 967
To do ȝoure lust but I desire also
ȝou for to serue and plese in my degre
Wiþouten feynyng and schal eu*er*emo 970
Ne neuer for no wele ne no woo
Ne schal þe goost wiþinne my*n* herte stente
To loue ȝou best/ wiþ al my trewe entente 973

¶ And wiþ þat word sche gan the house to dighte 974
And tables for to sette and beddes make [leaf 142]
And peyned hire to do al þat sche mighte
Preyinge þe chambereres for goddes sake 977
To hasten hem and faste swepe and schake
And sche þe moste s*er*uisable of alle
haþ eu*er*y chambre arrayed and his halle 980

¶ Abouten vndren gan þis erl alighte 981
And wiþ him brought his noble children tweye
ffor wiþ þe poeple ran to see þe sight
Of hire array so richely byseye 984
And þan at erst amonges hem þey seye
That walter was no fool þough̄ þat him liste
To chaunge his wyf for it was for þe beste 987

¶ ffor sche is fairer as þey demen alle 988
þan is Grisilde and more tendre of age
And fairer fruyt betwen hem schulde falle
And more plesaunce for hire heih lynage 991
hire broþer eek so fair was of visage
That hem to se þe poeple haþ cauȝt plesaunce
Co*m*mendynge now þe marquys gouernaunce 994

¶ O stormy poeple vnsad and euer vntrewe 995
Ay vndiscrete and chaungyng as a fane
Delityng ay in rombile þat is newe
ffor lik þe mone ay wexen ȝe and wane 998

Ay ful of clappyng dere y-nough a Iane
ȝoure dome is fals ȝour inconstance wel preueþ
A ful gret fool is he þat on ȝou leueueþ 1001

¶ Thus saiden sadde folk in þat Cite 1002
Whan þat þe peple gazed vp and doun
ffor þey were glade right for þe nouelte
To han a newe lady of oure toun 1005
No more of þis now make I mencioun
But to Grisilde anon wil I me dresse
And telle hire constance and hire besynesse 1008

¶ fful besy was Grisilde in euery þing 1009
That to þe feste was ap*er*tenent
Right nought was sche abayssht of hire cloþing [lf 142, bk]
þough it were rude and eek somdel torent 1012
But with glad chere to þe gate is went
With oþer folk to grete þe marquysesse
And after þat doþ forþ hire besynesse 1015

¶ Wiþ so glad chere his gestes sche resceyueþ 1016
And connyngly euerich in his degre
That defaute no man apparceyueþ
But ay þey wondren what sche mighte be 1019
þat in so pore array was for to se
And coude such hono*ur* & reu*e*rence
And worþily þey preysen hire prudence 1022

¶ In al þis mene while sche ne stente 1023
þis mayde and eek hir broþer to comende
With all*e* hire herte in ful benigne entente
So wel þat no man couþe hire pris amende 1026
But atte laste whan þise lordes wende
To sitte doun at mete he gan to calle
Grisilde as sche was besy in his halle 1029

¶ Grisilde q*uod* he as it were in his play 1030
how likeþ þe my wijf and hire beaute
Right wel q*uod* sche my lord for in good fey
A fairer sawe I neuer non þan sche 1033
I pray to god ȝif ȝou prosp*er*ite
And so hope I þat he wil to ȝou sende
Plesaunce ynow vnto ȝour lyues ende 1036

¶ O þing beseke I ȝou and warne also / 1037
þat ȝe prike wiþ no tormentynge
þis tendre mayden as ȝe han do mo
ffor sche is fostred in hire norischinge 1040
more tenderly and to my supposynge
Sche coude nought aduersite endure
As coude a pore fostred creature/ 1043

And whan þis walt*er* saugh hir pacience 1044
hire glad cher and no malice at al
And he so often hadde don hire offence
And sche ay sadde and constant as a wal [leaf 143]
Continuyng eu*er*e hire Innocence ou*er*al
This sturdy marquys gan hire herte dresse
To rewen on hire wyfly stedfastnesse 1050

¶ This is ynough Grisilde myn q*uod* he 1051
Be now no more agast ne yuel apayed
I haue þy feiþ and þi benignite
As wel as euer wo*m*man was assayed 1054
In gret astate and pou*er*eliche arrayed
Now knowe I deere wijf þy stedfastnesse /
And hire in armes toke and gan hire kesse 1057

¶ And sche for wonder took of hit no keepe 1058
Sche þouȝte nought what þing he to hir sayde/
Sche ferde as sche hadde stirte out of hir slepe
Til sche out of hir masednesse abrayde 1061

Grisilde q*uod* he god þat / for vs deyed
þou art' my wyf' ne non oþer I haue
Ne neuer hadde so god my soule saue 1064

¶ This is þy doughter which þou hast' supposed 1065
To be my wijf' þat' oþer feiþfully
Schal be myn [heir] as I haue ay purposed
þou bare him in þi body trewely 1068
At' boloygne haue I kept' hem pryuyly
Tak' hem aȝein for now mayst þou not seye
þat' þou hast' lorn non of' þy children tweye 1071

¶ And folk' þat' oþerwise han sayd of' me 1072
I warne hem wel þat' I haue don þis dede
ffor no malice ne for no cruelte
But' for tassaye in þe þy wommanhede 1075
And nat' to slee my children god forbede
But' for to kepe hem pryuyly and stille
Til I þi purpos knewe and al þy wille 1078

¶ Whan þis herde a swowne doun sche falleþ 1079
ffor pytous ioye and after hir swownynge
Sche boþe hire ȝonge children to hire calleþ
And in his armes pitously wepynge 1082
Embraceþ hem and tendrely kissinge [leaf 143, back]
fful like a moder wiþ hire salte teeres
Sche baþeþ boþe hire visage and hire heres 1085

¶ O which a pytous sight' it' was to see 1086
hir swownyng' and hire humble voys to heere
Graunt' mercy lord god I þanke it' ȝou q*uod* she
þat' ȝe han saued me my children deere 1089
now rekke I neuer to be ded right' heere
Siþþe I stonde in ȝour loue and in ȝour grace
No fors of' deþ ne whan my spirit' pace 1092

¶ O tendre o dere o ȝonge children myne 1093
ȝour woful moder wende stedefastly
That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
hadde eten ȝou but god of his mercy 1096
And ȝoure benigne fader tenderly
haþ don ȝou kepte and in þe same stounde
Al sodeinly sche swapte a doun to grounde 1099

¶ And in hire swowne so sadly holdeþ sche 1100
hire children tuo whan sche gan hem enbrace
þat with gret sleighte and wiþ gret difficulte
þe children from hire arm þei gon arace 1103
O many a teer on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem þat stooden hire besyde
vnneþe aboute hire mighten þey abyde 1106

Walter hir gladeþ and hir sorwe slakeþ 1107
Sche ryseþ vp abaysshed from hire traunce
And euery wight hire ioye and feste makeþ
til sche haþ caught azein hir contenañce 1110
Walter hire doþ feiþfully plesaunce
þat it is deynte for to se þe cheere
Bitwixe hem tuo now þey ben mett in feere 1113

¶ This ladyes whan þat þey here tyme saye 1114
han taken hire and in to chambre goon
And streepen hire out of hire ruyde array
And in a cloþ of gold þat brighte schoon 1117
Wiþ a coroune of many a riche stoon
vppon hire heed þey in to halle hir brought [leaf 144]
And þan sche was honoured as sche ought 1120

¶ Thus haþ þis pitous day a blisful ende 1121
ffor euery man and wo*m*man doþ here might
This day in mirþe and reuel to dispende
Til on þe welken schone þe sterres bright 1124

ffor more solempne in eu*er*y ma*n*nes sight
þis feste was and gretter of' costage
Than was þe.reuel of' hire mariage 1127

¶ fful many a ȝeer in hih p*ros*p*er*ite 1128
lyuen þise tuo in concord and in reste
And richely his douȝ*ter* maryed he
vnto a lord on of' þe worþieste 1131
Of' all*e* ytayle þanne and pes & reste
his wyues fader in his court' he kepeþ
Til þat' his soule out' of' his body creepeþ 1134

¶ his sone succediþ in his heritage 1135
In reste and pees aft*er* his fader day
And fortunat' eek' was in mariage
Al putte he not' his wijf' in gret' assay 1138
This world is not' so strong' it' is no nay
As it' haþ ben in olde tyme ȝore
And herkneþ what' þis auctor seiþ þ*er*fore 1141

This story is sayd not' for þat' wyues scholde 1142
ffolwen grisilde as in humilite
ffor it' were importable þough þey wolde
But' for þat' eu*er*y wight' in his degre 1145
Schulde be constante in aduersite
As was Grisilde þerfore Petrayke writeþ
þis story which he wiþ his stile enditeþ 1148

ffor siþþe a wo*m*man was so paciente 1149
vnto a mortel man wel more vs ouȝte
Resceyuen al in gree þat' god vs sente
ffor grete skiles he preeueþ þat' he wrouȝte 1152
But' he ne tempteþ no man þat' he brouȝte
As seiþ seint' Iame ȝif' ȝe his pistil rede
He preueþ folk' alday it is no drede [leaf 144, back] 1155

And suffreþ vs as for oure excercise 1156
Wiþ scharpe scorges of aduersite
fful often to ben betyn in sondry wyse
Nought for to knowe oure wille for certes he 1159
Or we were born knew al oure frelete
And for oure beste is al oure gouernañce
lat vs þanne lyue in vertuous suffraunce 1162

¶ But lordinges o word herkeneþ ar I go 1163
It were ful hard to fynde now a dayes
In alle a toun Grisildes þre or tuo
ffor if þat þey were putte to suche assayes 1166
The golde of hem haþ now so badde layes
Wiþ bras þat þough þe coyne be fayr at eye
It wolde raþer berst/ a tuo þan plye 1169

¶ ffor which here for þe wyues loue of Baþe 1170
Whos lijf and al hire helþe god mayntene
In hire maystrye and elles were it skaþe
I wolde wiþ lusty herte freisshe and grene 1173
Sey ȝou a song to glade ȝou I wene
And late vs stynte of ernestful matiere
herkneþ my song þat seiþ in þis manere 1176

¶ lenvoye de Chaucere

¶ Grisild is deed and eek hir pacience
And boþe at oones buryed in ytayle
Wher fore I crye in open audience 1179
No wedded man be hardy to assayle /
his wyues pacience in hope to fynde /
Grisildis for in certes he schal fayle / 1182

O noble wyues ful of heih prudence
lat non humilite ȝoure tonge nayle /
Ne lat no clerk haue cause or diligence 1185
To write of ȝou a story of such meruayle
As Grisildis pacient and kynde
lest chychevache ȝow swolwe in hire entrayle 1188

ffolweþ herto and holdeþ no scilence [a leaf out]
[but eu*er*e answerith / in the contir-taill*e* [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 82]
beth nat bidaffid / for youre innocence 1191
but sharply take on yow / the gou*er*naill*e*
enpoynteth wel this lessou*n* / in youre mynde
for comune p*ro*fit / sith hit may availl*e* 1194

And ye Archiwivis / stondith at defence
syn ye be stronge / as is a grete Camaill*e*
ne suffrith not / that men do yow offence 1197
and slender wivis / as feble in bataill*e*
beith egre as a Tigre / bi-yende the se fer in ynde
ay clappith as a mylle / I yow consaill*e* 1200

Ne dredith hem nought doith hem no reu*er*ence
for though thyn housbond armed be / in maill*e*
the wordis of thi crabbed eloquence 1203
shal persshe his breste / *and* eke his auentaill*e*
in gelousie I rede eke / thow him bynde
and thow shalt make him covche / as a quaill*e* 1206

Yf thow be feyre / there folk ben in p*re*sence
shewe thow thi visage / *and* thin apparaill*e*
yf thow be foule / be fre of thi dispence 1209
to gete the frendis / ay do thi travaill*e*
be eu*er* of chere as light / as leff on lynde
and lete him care · wepe / wrynge *and* waill*e* 1212

Here endith the Clerke of Oxonford
his tale /]

[and next folwith̄ his tale of Ianu*ar*e and May. [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]

Whilom ther was dwellyng / in Lumbardye
a worthi knygh̄t / that borne was in Pavie
in which̄ he lived / in grete prosp*er*ite
and sexti yere / a wiffles man was he 1248
and folwed ay / his bodyly delite
on women / there as was his appetite
as don these foolis / that ben seculere
and whan he was passed sexti yere 1252
were hit for holynes / or for dotage
I can not sey / but suche a grete corage
had this knygh̄t / to be a wedded man
that day *and* nigh̄t / he doth̄ al that he can 1256
to espien where he mygh̄te / wedded be
prayng oure lord / graunte him that he
mygh̄te onys knowe / of that blisful liff
that is bitwixe an housbonde / *and* his wiff 1260
and for to live / vnder that holy bonde
with̄ which̄ first / god man *and* woman bonde
noon other liff seide he / is worthe a bene
for wedlok is so esy / *and* so clene 1264
that in this world / hit is a p*ar*adise
thus seide this olde knygh̄t / that was so wise
and c*er*teynly / as soth̄ as god is kynge
to take a wiff / hit is a glorious thinge 1268
and namely whan a man is olde / *and* hore
than is a wiff the fructe / of his tresore
than shulde he take a yonge wiff / *and* a feyre [*leaf* 115, *back*]
on which̄ he mygh̄te / engender him an heyre 1272

CORPUS 321 (6-T. 443) [this page, Arch. Seld. B. 14]

and lede his liff in ioye / *and* in solas [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
where that these bachelers / synge alas
whan that thei fynden / any adu*er*site
in love / whicħ nys but childis vanyte 1276
and trewely hit sit wel / to be so
that bachelers han ofte peyne *and* wo
on brotil gronde thei bilde / *and* brotilnes
they fynden / whan thei wenyn sikernes 1280
thei live but as a brid / or as a beste
in liberte / *and* vnder noon a-reste
there as a wedded man / in his estate
livitħ a liff blisful / *and* ordynate 1284
vnder the yoke of mariage I-bounde
wel may his herte / in ioye *and* blis habounde
for who can be so boxom / as a wiff
who is so trewe / *and* eke so ententiff 1288
to kepe him sike *and* hole / as his make
for wel or wo / she wol him not forsake
she is not wery / him to loue *and* se*r*ue
thoughħ that he lye bedred / til he sterve] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract ends*]
And ȝit' some clerkes seyn it' nys nouȝt so [Corpus MS, leaf 145]
Of' which Theoffraste / is on of' þo
What' fors þeiȝ theofraste luste lye
Ne take no wijf' q*uod* he for husbandrye 1296
As for to spare in housholde þin dispence
A trewe seru*a*unt doþ more diligence
þy good to kepe þan þin owen wijf'
ffor sche wol clayme half' part' al hire lijf' 1300
And if' þat' þou be seek' so god me saue
þy verray frendes oþer a trewe knaue
Wol kepe þe bet' þan sche þat' wayteþ ay
After þy good and haþ don many a day 1304
[and if thow take a wiff / in thin age oolde
fful lighħtly maist thow be a Cokewoolde] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
To þis entente and an C siþes wurse 1307
[writeħ this man / there / god his bonys cors] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]

But tak no kepe of alle such vanyte
Defye theofrast and herkne me
A wyff is goddes ȝifte verrayly
Alle oþer maner ȝiftes hardily 1312
As landes rentes pasture or comune
Oþer oþer ȝiftes þat moebles of fortune
þat passen as a schadewe on a wall
But drede nought if pleynly speke I schall 1316
A wyf wil laste and in þin hous endure
Wel lenger þan þe luste to endure
mariage is a ful gret sacrament
he which haþ no wijf I holde him schent 1320
he lyueþ helples and is al desolat
I speke of folk in seculer estat
And herkne why I say nouȝt þis for nouȝt
þe wo*m*man is for mannes help y-wrouȝt 1324
þe hihe god when he hadde ad*a*m maked
And sawe him allone bely naked
God of his grete goodnesse sayde he þanne
lete vs now make an helpe to þis manne 1328
ylike to himself and þen he made Eue
here may ȝe se and here-by ȝe preue
That wijf is mannes helpe and his comfort
his paradis terreste and his disport [leaf 145, back] 1332
So buxom and so ve*r*tuous is sche
þey mosten needes lyue in vnite
Of fleisshe þei ben and O fleisch as I gesse
nouȝt but on herte in wele and in distresse 1336
A wyf! A seinte mary be*n*edicite
how might a man han any adue*r*site
þat haþ a wyf certes I can nouȝt say
þe blisse þat is bitwexe hem tway 1340
þer may no tonge telle or herte þynke
If he be pore sche helpeþ him to swynke
Sche keepiþ his good and wasteþ neuer a del
And al þat hire housband lust hir likeþ wel 1344

Sche saiþ nouȝt ones nay whan he saiþ ȝe
Do þis saiþ he al redy sire seyþ sche
O blisful ordre O wedlok precious
þou art so mery and eek so vertuous 1348
And so comended and aproued eke
That euery man þat halt/ him worþ a leek
vpon his bare knees aught al his lijf
þanken his god þat him haþ sent a wyf 1352
Oþer preyed god him for to sende
A wijf to laste vnto his lyues ende
ffor þanne his lijf is sett in sikernesse
he may nouȝt be desceyued as I gesse 1356
So þat he werche after his wyues reed
þanne may he boldely beren vp his heed
þey ben so trewe and so wys
ffor which if þou wolt worchen as þe wyse 1360
Do alway so as þe womman wol þe rede
lo how þat Iacob as þise clerkes rede
By good counseil of his moder rebekke
Band þe kydes skyn abouten his nekke 1364
ffor which his fadres benysoñ he wan
lo Iudith as þe story eek telle can
By wys counseil sche goddes poeple kepte
And slough̃ him Olophinus whiles he slepte [leaf 146] 1368
Lo how Abygayle by good counseil how þat sche
Saued hire housbonde Nabal whan þat he
Schulde han be slayn and loke after also
By good counseil delyuered out of wo 1372
The poeple of god and made him mardoche
Of Assuer enchaunced for to be
Ther is no þing gree superlatiff
As seiþ Senek aboue an humble wyf 1376
Suffre þyn wyues tonge as Catoun byt
Sche schal comaunde and þou schalt suffre yt
And ȝit sche wolde obeye of curtesye
A wyf is kepere of þin housbondrye 1380

Wel may þe seeke man bewayle and wepe /
Ther as þer nys no wijf þe hous to keepe
I warne þe if wysly þou wilt wirche
loue wel þy wyf as crist loueþ his chirche 1384
If þou loue þy self þou louest þy wyf
No man hateþ his flesch but in his lyf
he fostreþ it/ and þerfore byd I þe
Cherissche þy wijf or þou schalt neuer þe 1388
housbond & wijf what so men Iape or pleye
Of worldly folk holde þe righte weye
þey ben so knyt þer may non harm betyde
And namely vpon þe wyues syde 1392
ffor which þis Ianuarye of which I tolde
Considereþ haþ in wiþ his dayes olde
þe lusty þe vertuous quyete
þat is in mariage hony swete 1396
And for his frendes on a day sent
To telle hem þeffect of his entent
Wiþ face sadde he haþ hem þis tale tolde
he sayde frendes I am hoor and olde 1400
And almost god wot at my pittis brinke
vpon my sowle somwhat most I þinke
I haue my body folyly dispended
y-blessed be god þat it schal ben amended [leaf 146, back] 1404
ffor I wol be certein a wedded man
And þat in alle þe haste þat I can
vnto som mayde fayr and tendre of age
I pray you schapeþ for my mariage 1408
Al sodeinly for I wol nouȝt abyde
And I wole fonde aspye on my syde
To whom I may be wedded hastely
But for as moche þat ȝe ben mo þen I 1412
ȝe schullen raþer such a þing aspyen
þan I and wher me luste best allyen
But o þing warne I ȝou my frendes deere
I wol non old wyf haue in no manere / 1416

She schal nou3t passe xvj 3er certayn
Old fleissh and 3ong fleissh þat wolde I han ful fayn
Bet is q*uod* he a pyk þan a pykrelle
And bet þan olde beef is þe tendre feell*e* 1420
I wol no wo*m*man xx^ti^ 3er of age
It nys but benestraw and gret forage
And eek þis olde wydewes god it woot
þey konne so moche craft on wades boot 1424
So mochil broken harme whan þat hem liste
þat wiþ hem schulde I neuer lyuen in reste
ffor sondry scoles makeþ subtile clerkys
Wo*m*men of many a scole half a clerk is 1428
But certeinly a 3ong þing may me gye
Right as men may warm wax wiþ handes to-plye
þerfore I sey 3ow pleinly in a clause
I wol non old wijf haue for þis cause 1432
ffor if so were if I hadde so myschaunce
That I in hire ne couþe han no plesaunce
þenne scholde I lede my lijf in aduoutrye
And so streyt to þe deuyl whan I dye 1436
Ne children schulde I non vpon hire geten
3it were me leuer houndes hadde me eten
þan þat myn heritage scholde falle
In st*r*aunge hande and þus I telle 3ou all*e* [leaf 147] 1440
I dowte nought I wot þe cause why
men schulde wedde and forþ*er*more wot I
þer spekeþ many men of mariage
þat wot nomore of hit þen wot my page 1444
ffor whiche causes men schulde take a wyf
If he may not chaste be by his lijf
Tak him a wijf wiþ gret deuocioun
By cause of leofful p*ro*creacioñ 1448
Of children to þe hono*ur* of god aboue
And nought only for p*ar*amo*ur* and for loue
And for þei schulden leccherie eschue
And 3elde here dette whil þat it is newe 1452

Or for þat ilke man schulde helpe oþ*er*
In meschief as a soster schal do a broþ*er*
And lyue in chastite ful heuenly
But sires by ȝour leue þat am not I 1456
ffor [god] be þanked I dar make auaunt
I feele my lemes starke and suffisaunt
To don al þat a man bilongeþ to do
I wot my seluen best what I may do 1460
þoughh I be hoor and fare / as doþ a tree
þat blosmeth er þat fruyt y-waxe be
A blossemed tree nys neyþer druye ne deed
I feele me no wher hoor but on myn heed 1464
Myn herte and my*n* lymes ben as greene
As laurere þat purghh þe ȝer is seene
And seþenes ȝe han herd al myn entent
I pray ȝou to my wille þat ȝe assent 1468
Dyuerse men dyu*er*sely him tolde
Of mariages many ensamples olde
Some blamed it some preysed it certein
But atte laste schortly for to seyn 1472
As alday falleþ altercacioñ
Bitwixe frendes in disputacioñ
þer fel a stryf betwixe his breþ*er*en tuo
Of which þat on was cleped Placebo [leaf 147, back] 1476
Placebo seyde o Ianuare broþer
To ȝou telle I þis tale and to non oþer
fful litel need hadde ȝe my lord so deere /
Counseil to aske of any þat is heere 1480
But þat ȝe be on so ful of sapience
þat ȝou ne likeþ for ȝour heighh prudence
To weyue fro þe word of Salomon
This word sayde he vnto vs eu*er*ychon 1484
Wirke all*e* þing by counseil þus seyde he
And þanne schalt þou nouȝt repente þe
But þoughh þat Salomon speke such a word
myn owen deere brother and my lord 1488

So wisly god my soule bringe at reste
I halde ȝoure owne counseil for þe beste
ffor broþer myn of me take þis motyf
I haue now ben a court man al my lyf 1492
And ȝit god wot þoughh I vnworþy be
I haue standen in ful gret degre
Abouten lordes in ful gret estate
ȝit hadde I neuer wiþ non of hem debate 1496
I neuer hem contraried trewely
I wot wel þat my lord can more þan I
What þat he saiþ I halde it ferme & stable
I saye þe same or oþer þing semblable 1500
A ful gret fool is eny counseilour
þat serueþ eny lord of heih honour
þat dar *presume* or ones þenken it/
þat his counseil schulde passe his lordes witt 1504
Nay lordes ben no fooles by my fay
ȝe haue ȝoure self spoken here to day
So heih sentence so holy and so wel
That I consente and conferme euery del 1508
ȝoure wordes all*e* and ȝoure opynioun
By god þer nys no man in al þis toun
Ne in ytaille couþe bet han sayd
Crist haldeþ him of þis ful wel a-payd [leaf 148] 1512
And trewely it is an heih corage
Of eny man þat stopen is in age
To take a ȝong wyf by my fader kyn
ȝoure herte hangeþ vpon a Ioly pyn 1516
Doþ now in þis matier righht as ȝou leste
ffor fynally I halde it for þe beste
¶ Iustynus þat ay stille sat and herde
he rightt on þis wise to Placebo answerde 1520
Now bro*þer* myn be pacient I preye
Siþenes ȝe han sayd and herkneþ what I seye
Senek amonges oþer wordes wyse
Seiþ þat a man him oughte right wel auyse 1524

To whom he ȝeuyþ his lond oþer his catel
And seþenes I aught/ auyse me right wel
To whom I ȝiue my good awey fro me
Wel more I auȝte to auȝse me 1528
To whom I ȝiue my body for alwey
I warne ȝou wel it nys no childes pley
To take a wijf wiþoute auysement
Men moste enquere þis is myn assent 1532
Wheþ*er* she be wys or sobre or drunkelewe
Oþer proude oþ*er* oþ*er*wey a schrewe
A chydester or a wastour of þy good
Oþir riche or pore or of maneres wood 1536
Al be it so þat no man fynde schal
None in þis worlde þat trottiþ hool in al
Ne man ne beeste suche as men conne deuyse
But naþeles it auȝt ynoug̃h suffise 1540
Wiþ any wijf if þat so were sche hadde
mo goode þewes þan hire vices badde
And al þis askeþ leiser for to enquere /
ffor god it woot I haue wepte many a teere 1544
fful priuyly siþ þat I hadde a wyf
Preyse who so wole a wedded mannes lijf
Certayn I fynde in hit but coste and care
And obs*er*uaunces of alle blisses bare [leaf 148, back]
And ȝit god wot my neygheburs aboute.
And namely of wo*m*men many a rowte
Sayn þat I haue þe moste stedefast wijf
And eek þe meekest oon þat bereþ lijf 1552
But I wot best wher wryngeþ me my scho
ȝe may for me rig̃ht as ȝou likeþ do
Auyseþ ȝou ȝe ben a man of age
how þat ȝe entren in to mariage 1556
And namely wiþ a ȝong wijf and a fayr
By him þat made water erþe and ayr
þe ȝongest man þat is in al þis route
Is besy ynoug̃h to bringen it aboute 1560

To han his wijf' allone trusteþ to me
ȝe schulle nouȝt' plesen hire oonly ȝeres þre
þis is to seyn to don hire plesa*u*nce
A wijf' axeþ ful many an obs*er*uaunce 1564
I p*ray* ȝou þat' ȝe ne ben euyl payed
Wel q*uod* þis Ianuar*e* and hast' þou al sayd
Straw for þyn Senek' and for þy p*ro*uerbis
I counte nought' a paner ful of' herbes 1568
Of' scole termes wiser men þan þou
And þou hast' herde assenteden right' now /
To my purpos Placebo what' say ȝe
I say it is a cursed man q*uod* he 1572
þat' letteþ matrimonye sikerly
And wiþ þat' word þay rysen sodeinly
And ben assented fully þat' he scholde
Be weddid whan him luste and whan he wolde 1576
þe fantasye and þe besy curiousnesse
ffro day to day gan in þe soule imp*r*esse /
Of' Ianuare aboute his mariage /
many fayr schapp and many fayr visage / 1580
þer passeþ þorgh his herte night' be night
As whos took' a myrour polisshed bright'
And sette it' in a comune market' place
þenne scholde he se many a figure pace [leaf 149] 1584
By his myrour and in þe same wise
Gan Ianuar*e* in wiþ his þouȝt' deuyse
Of' maydenes whiche þat' dwelte besyde
he wiste nought' wher he might' abyde 1588
ffor þouȝ þat' oon haþ beaute in hire face /
Anoþer stant' so in þe poeples grace /
ffor hire sadnes and hire benignite
þat' of' þe poeple grettest' voys hadde sche 1592
And some were riche and hadde badde name
but' naþeles bitwixe ernest' and game
he atte laste appoynted him on oon
And leet' all*e* oþer fro his herte gon 1596

And ches hir of his owen auctorite
ffor loue is blynd alday and may not se
And whan þat he was in þe bed y-brought
he purtreyed in his herte and in his þought 1600
hire freisshe beaute / and hir age tender
hire myddel smal and hir armes long and sklender
hire wise gou*er*naunce and hire grete gentilnes
hir wo*m*manly berynge and hire sadnes 1604
And whan þat he was fro hire condescended
him þouȝte his þouȝt might nouȝt ben amended
ffor whan þat he himself concluded hadde
him þouȝt euer oþer mannes witte so badde 1608
þat inpossible it were to replye
aȝein his choys þis was his fantasye
his frendes sent he to at his instance
And preyed hem to don him þat plesaunce 1612
þat hastely þey wolden don him come /
he wolde abregge here labour all*e* and some
Needeþ nomore for him to goon or ryde
he was apoynted þer he wolde abyde 1616
Placebo cam and eek his freendes sone
And alþer first he bad hem all*e* a bone
þat non of hem non argumentes make
Aȝeins þe purpos which þat he haþ take [leaf 149, back]
Which purpos was plesaunt/ to god sayde he
And verray ground of his p*ro*sp*er*ite
he sayde þer was a mayden in þe toun
Which þat of beaute hadde gret renoun 1624
Al were it so sche were of smal degre
Sufficeþ him hire ȝouþe and hire beaute
Which mayde he seyde schulde ben his wiff
To lede in ese and holynesse his lijf 1628
And þanked god þat he might han hire al
þat no wight wiþ his blisse parten schal
And preyed hem to laboure in þis neede /
And schaped þat he fayled not to spede 1632

ffor þanne he seyde his spirit was at eese
þen is q*uod* he no þing may me displese /
Saue o þing prikeþ in my conscience
þe which I wol reherse in ȝoure presence / 1636
I haue q*uod* he herd seyd ful ȝore ago
þer may no man han parfyt blisses tuo
þis is to say in erþe and eek in heuene
ffor þey he kepte him fro þe synnes seuene 1640
And eek for eu*er*y braunche of þilke tre
ȝit is þer so parfit p*rosper*ite
And so gret ese and lust in mariage
þat euer I am agast now in myn age 1644
þat I schal lede now so mery a lijf
[so delicate withouten wo / or striff [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14; *no gap in Corpus.*]
that I shal haue myn heuen / in erthe] heere
ffor siþenes þat verray heuene is bought so deere 1648
Wiþ tribulacioñ and gret penaunce
how scholde I lyue in such plesaunce
As all*e* wedded men doþ wiþ here wyues /
Come to þe blisse þer crist eterne on lyue is 1652
þis is my drede and ȝit myn breþ*er*en tweye
Assoylleþ me þis questioñ I ȝou p*rey*e
Iustynus which þat hated his folye
Answeryng anon riȝt in his Iapere 1656
And for he wolde his longe tale abregge
he wolde non auctorite alegge [leaf 150]
But seyde sire so þer be non obstacle
Oþer þan þis god of his heih miracle 1660
And of his mercy may so for ȝou wirche
þat er ȝe han ȝour ȝiftes of holy chirche
ȝe may repente of wedded mannes lijf
In which ye sayn þer is neiþer woo ne strijf 1664
And elles god forbede but if he sente
A wedded man grace to repente
Wel often raþer þan a sengil man
And þerfore sire þe beste reed I can 1668

Dispeyreþ ȝou nouȝt haueþ in memory
P*ar*aunter sche may be ȝour purgatory
Sche may be goddes mene and goddes whippe
þan schal ȝour soule vp to heuene skippe 1672
Swifter þan doþ an arwe out of a bowe
I hope to god her-after schalt þou knowe
þat þer nys non so gret felicite
In mariage ne neuer more schal be 1676
þat ȝou schal lakke of ȝour saluacioñ
So þat ȝe vse as skile is and resoun
þe lustes of ȝour wijf attemp*er*elly
And þat ȝe plese hir nouȝt to amerously 1680
And þat ȝe kepe ȝou eek fro oþer synne /
Myn tale is doon for my witte is þinne
Beþ nouȝt agast here-of my broþer
But let vs wade fro þis mater to anoþer 1684
þe wijf of Bathe if ȝe han vnderstonde
Of mariage which ȝe han on honde
Declared haþ ful wel in litel space
ffareþ now wel god haue ȝou in his g*ra*ce 1688
And wiþ þis word þis Iustyne and his broþer
han take here leue and ilke of hem of oþer
ffor whan þey sawe it moste needes be
þey wrouȝten so by wys and sleigh trete 1692
þat sche þis mayden which þat mayus hight
As hastely as euer þat sche might [leaf 150, back]
Schal wedded be vnto Ianuarie /
It trowe it were to long ȝou to tarie 1696
If I ȝou tolde of euery scryt or band
By which þat sche was feffed in his land
Oþer for to herken of hire riche aray
But fynally y-comen is þis day 1700
That to þe chirche boþe ben þey went
ffor to resceyue þe holy sacrament
fforþ comþ þe prest wiþ stole aboute his nekke /
And bad hire be ylike Sarra and Rebekke 1704

In wisdom and trouþe of mariage
And sayde his orisouns as is his vsage
And crouched hem and bad god schulde hem blesse
And made al siker ynough with holynesse / 1708
þus ben þey weddid with solempnite
And atte feste sitteþ he and sche
Wiþ oþer worþy folk vpon þe deys
Al ful of ioye and blisse is þe paleys 1712
And ful of instrumentz and of vitayle
þe moste deyntevous of alle ytayle
Byforn hem of instrumentz which a soun
That Orpheus ne of Phebes ampheoun 1716
Ne maden neuer such a melodye
And at euery cours cam lowde menstralcie
þat neuer Ioab trumped for to heere /
Neiþer Theodomas ȝit half so cleere 1720
And Thebes whan þe cite was in doute /
Bacus þe wyn hem schenkeþ al aboute
And venus lawheþ vpon euery wight
ffor Ianuarye was bycome here knight 1724
And wolde boþe assayen his corage
In liberte and eek in mariage
And wiþ hir fyr brond wiþ hire hand aboute
Daunsiþ byforn þe bryde al aboute 1728
And certeynly I dar wel seyn riȝt þis
Emyneus þat god of weddyng is [leaf 151]
Sawe neuer in his lijf so mery a wedded man
halde þou þy pes þou poete Marcean 1732
þat writest vs þat ilke weddyng mery
Of hire phylologie and of mercurye
And of þe sanges þat þe muses song
So smale as eek þin penne and eek þy tong 1736
ffor to discryuen of þis mariage
When tendre ȝouþe haþ wedded stowpyng age
þer is such myrþe þat it may nouȝt be write
Assayeþ it ȝou self þen may ȝe wite / 1740

If þat I lakke or non in þis matere
Mayus þat sitt wiþ so benigne a cheere
hire to beholde it semed fayerye
Queene Ester loked neuer wiþ such an yhe 1744
On assuer so meke a look haþ sche
I may ȝou nouȝt deuyse al hire beaute
But þus moche of hir beaute telle I may
þat sche was like þe brighte morwe of may 1748
ffulfilde of beaute and of plesaunce
þis Ianuarye is rauyssht in a traunce
And at euery tyme he loked on hire face /
But in his herte he gan hire to manace 1752
þat he þat nigħt in armes wolde hir streyne
harder þan euyr parys did Eleyne
But naþeles ȝit had he gret pite
þat þilke night offenden hire moste he 1756
And þouȝt allas O tender creature
Now wolde god ȝe mighte wel endure
Al my corrage / it is so scharpe and kene
I am agast ȝe schullen it nat sustene 1760
But god forbede þat I did al my myght
Now wolde god þat it were waxen nyght
And þat þe nigħt wolde lasten eueremo
I wolde þat al þis poeple were a go 1764
And finally he doþ alle his labour
As he best mighte sauynge his hono*ur* [leaf 151, back]
To hasten hem fro þe mete in subtil wise
þe tyme came þat resoun was to ryse 1768
And after þat men daunce and drynke faste
And spices al aboute þe hous þay caste
And ful of ioye and blisse is euery man
Al but a squyer þat highte damyan 1772
Which karf byforn þe knigħt many a day
he was so rauysshed on his lady may
That for þe verray peyne he was neyȝ wood
Almost he swelt and swowned þer he stood 1776

As þat sche bare daunsyng in hir hand
So freisshe sche was and þerto so likand [*spurious*]
And to his bed he went him hastily
Nomore of him at þis tyme speke I 1780
But þere I lete him weepe ynoughh and pleyne
Till freissche may wil rewen on his peyne
¶ O perilous fyr þat in þe bedstraw bredi þ
O famuler foo þat his seruise beedi þ 1784
O seruañt traytour fals holy hewe
I-like to þe neddre sley3 and in Bosom vntrewe
God schilde vs alle fro 3oure iniquitance
O Ianuare drunken in plesaunce 1788
O mariage see how þine Damyan
þin oughne squyer and þyn borne man
Entendi þ to do þe vylenye
God graunte þe þin harmly foo to aspye 1792
ffor in þis world nys worse pestylence
Than homly foo alday in þy presence
Parfourmed ha þ þis deuyn day his ark dyurne
No lenger may þe body of him soiourne 1796
The Orisowte as in þat latitude
Night wi þ his mantel þat is so derk & rude
Gan for to sprede þe mysperye aboute
ffor which departed is þe lusty route 1800
ffor Ianuare wi þ pank on euery syde
home to here houses lustily þei ryde / [leaf 152]
þer as þey don here þinges as hem leste
And whanne þay seye her tyme gon to reste 1804
Sone after þat þis hastyf Ianuare
Wol go to bedde he wol no lengere care
he drynke þ ypocras clarre and vernage
Of spices hote to encresen his corage 1808
And many a letuare hadde he ful fyn
Suche as þe cursed monk daun Constantyn
ha þ writen in his book of coytu
To eten hem alle he nas no þing eschewe 1812

And þus to his priue freendes seyde he
ffor goddes loue as sone as it may be
let' voyden alle þis hous in curteys wyse soone 1815
Men drunken and þe trauers drowe anone 1817
The bryde was brouȝt' to bedde as stille as stoon 1818
So hastede Ianuer it' moste be doon [*spurious*]
And whan þe bed was wiþ þe prest' y-blessed
Out' of' þe chambre haþ euery wigħt' him dressed 1820
And Ianuare haþ faste in armes take
his freissche may his paradys his make
he lulliþ hire he kisseþ hire ful ofte
Wiþ þikke brystles of' his berd vnsofte 1824
Ylike to þe skyn of' an houndfissħ scharp as brere
ffor he was schaue al newe in his manere
he rubbeþ hire vpon hire tendre face
And sayde þus allas I mot' trespace 1828
To ȝou my spouse and ȝou gretly offende
Or tyme come þat' I wol doun descende
But' naþeles considereþ þis *quod* he
þis nys no werkman what' so euer he be 1832
þat' may boþe wirche wel and hastely
þis wol be don at' leyser parfitly
It' is no force how longe þat' we pleye
I trowe in wedlok' coupled be we tweye 1836
And y-blessed be þe ȝok' þat' we ben Inne
ffor in oure actis we may do no synne / [leaf 152, back]
A man may do no synne wiþ his wijf'
Ne hurte himselue wiþ his owene knyf' 1840
Now we han leue to pleye vs by þe lawe
Thus laboureþ he til þat' þe day gan dawe
And þenne he takeþ a soppe in fyn clarre
And vprigħt' in his bedde þanne sitteþ he / 1844
And after þat' he sang' ful lowde and cleere
And kissed his wijf' and made wantoun cheere
he was al coltissch and ful of ragerie
And ful of' Girgoun as is a flekked pye / 1848

þe slakke skyn aboute his nekke schakeþ
Whil þat' he sang' so chaunteþ he and crakeþ /
But' god wot' what' may þouȝte in hire herte /
Whan sche him saugh vp sittyng' in his scherte 1852
In his night' cappe and wiþ his nekke lene /
Sche preyseþ nouȝt' his pleying' worþ a bene
þenne seyde he þus my restyng' wol I take
Now day is come I may no lenger wake 1856
And doun he leyd his heed and sleep til prime
And aftirward whan þat' he saugh̄ his tyme
vp ryseþ Ianuare but/ freissche may
holt' hire chambre vnto þe ferþe day 1860
As vsage is of' wyues for þe beste /
ffor euery labour som tyme mot' haue reste
Oþer elles longe may he nouȝt' endure
þis is to say no lyues creature 1864
Be it of' fissh̄ or brid or best' or man
Now wol I speke of' woful dauyan
þat' langureþ for loue as ȝe schullen heere
þerfore I speke to him in þis manere 1868
I say O sely Damyan allas
Answere to þis demaunde as in þis cas
how schalt' þou þy lady freisshe may
Telle þy wo sche wole alway say nay 1872
Eke if' þou speke sche wole þy wo bewreye
God be þin helpe I can no bettre seye : [leaf 153]
þis sike damyan in venus fyre
So brenneþ þat' he deyeþ for desire 1876
ffor which he putte his liff/ in aduenture
No lenger migh̄t' he in þis wise endure
But' priuyly a penner gan he borwe
And in a *lettre* wrot' he alle his sorwe 1880
In maner of' a complaynt' oþer a lay
vnto þis fair and freissche lady may
And in a purs of' silk' heng' on his scherte
he haþ y-put' and leyd it/ at his herte/ 1884

þe more þat at noon was þilke day
That Ianuare haþ wedded þat freissche may
In tuo of Taure was in þe Cancre Gliden
So longe haþ sche in hire chambre abyden 1888
As costume is vnto þise noblis alle
A bryde schal nouȝt eten in þe halle
Til dayes foure oþer þre dayes atte leste
y-passed ben þen lat hire go to feste 1892
þe ferþe day complet froo noon to noon
Whan þat þe hihe masse was y-doon
In halle sitt þis Ianuare and may
As freissh as is þe brighte someres day 1896
And so bifelle how þat þis goode man
Remembreþ him vpon þis damyan
And sayde seinte mary how may þis be
That Damyan entendiþ nouȝt to me 1900
Is he ay sike or how may þis betyde
his squyers whiche þat stooden him besyde
Excusynge him be cause of his seknesse
Which letted him to don his busynesse 1904
Non oþer cause mighte make him care
That me forþinkeþ quod þis Ianuare
he is a gentil squyer by my trouþe /
If þat he deyde it were harm and rouþe 1908
he is as wys discrete and secre
As eny man I wot of his degre [leaf 153, back]
And þerto manly and eek seruisable
And for to ben a þrifty man right able 1912
But after mete as sone as euer I may
I wole my self visite him and eek may
To don him al þe confort þat I can
And for þat word him blessed eu*er*y man 1916
That of his bounte and of his gentilnesse
He wolde so conforten him in his siknesse
His squyer for it was a gentil dede
Dame q*uod* he þis Ianuar take good hede 1920

That' at' after mete ȝe wiþ ȝour wo*m*men alle
Whan ȝe han ben in chambre out' of' þis halle
That' alle ȝe gon to se þis Damyan
Doþ him disport' he is a gentil man 1924
And telleþ him þat I wil him visite
haue I no þing' but rested me a lite
[and spede yow faste / for I wol abide
til that ye slepe / right bi my side] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
Now wiþ þat' worde he gan to him calle
A squyer þat' was marschal of' his halle
And tolde him certeyn þinges what' he wolde
This freisshe may haþ streyt' hir weye holde 1932
Wiþ alle hire wo*m*men vnto þis damyan
Doun by his beddes syde sat' sche þan
Confortyng' him as goodly as sche may
This damyan whan he his tyme say 1936
In secret' wise his purs and eek' his bille
In which þat' he writen hadde his wille
haþ putte in to hire hond wiþouten more
Saue þat' he siked wonder sore 1940
And softely to hire right þus sayde he
mercy and þat' ȝe discouereþ nouȝt' me
ffor I am ded if' þat' þis þing' be kyd
This purs haþ sche wiþinne hir bosme hid 1944
And went' hir way ȝe gete nomore of' me
But' vnto Ianure y-comen is sche
And on his beddes syde sitte ful softe
He takeþ hire and kisseþ hire ful ofte [lea 154] 1948
And leyde him doun to slepe and þat' anon
Sche feyned hire as þat' sche moste gon
þer as ȝe woot' þat' euery wight' mot' neede
And when sche of' þis bille haþ taken heede 1952
Sche rent' it al to cloutes at' þe laste
And in þe pryue softely sche it caste
Who studieþ now but' fayre freissche may
And a doun by Ianuer sche lay 1956

That sleep til þat þe coughe him haþ awaked
Anon he preyed hir to strepen hire al naked
he wolde of hire he sayde of hire haue som plesaunce
he seyde hire cloþes dide him encombraunce 1960
And sche obeyeþ be he leef or loþ
But lest þat precious folk be wiþ me wroþ
how þat he wrouȝte I dar to ȝou nouȝt telle
Oþer whether þat he þouȝt on p*ar*adys oþer of helle 1964
But I lete hem worchen in here wise
Til euesong rynge and þat þey moste aryse /
Were it by destyne oþir by auenture
Were it by influence or by nature 1968
Oþer in constillac*i*on þat in such estat
The heuene stood þat tyme fortunat
Was for to putte a bille of venus werkis
ffor all*e* þing haþ tyme as seyn þise clerkis 1972
To any wo*m*man for to gete hir loue
I can nouȝt say but þe grete god aboue
þat knoweþ þat non acte is causeles
he demeþ of all*e* for I wol holde my pes 1976
But soþ is þis how þat þis freissche may
haþ take such imp*r*essioñ þat day
On pite of þis sike Damyan
þat fro hir herte sche ne dryue can 1980
þe remembrance for to don him eese
Certein þouȝt sche whom þat þis þing displese
I rekke nouȝt for here I him assure
To loue him best of eny creature / [leaf 154, ba k] 1984
þoughh he na more nadde þan his scherte
lo pite renneþ sone in gentil herte
Her may ȝe se how excellent f*ra*nchise
In wo*m*men is whan þey narwe hem auyse 1988
Som tyrañt þer is as þer ben many oon
þat haþ an herte as hard as eny stoon
Which wolde han lete him steruen in þe place
Wel raþer þan haue g*ra*unted him þat grace 1992

And hem reioysen in here cruel pryde
And recched nouȝt to ben an homicide
¶ This gentil may fulfild of alle pite
Right so of hire hond a lettre made sche 1996
In which sche graunteþ him of hire verray grace
þer lackeþ nouȝt oonly but day and space
Wher þat sche mighte to his lust suffise
ffor it schal be right as he wol deuyse 2000
And whan sche saugh hire tyme vpon a day
To visite þis damyan goþ faire may
And sotilly þis lettre doun sche þriste
vnder his pilwe rede iff him liste 2004
Sche takeþ him by þe hond and harde him twiste
So secrely þat no wight hit wiste
And bad him be al hool and forþ sche wente
To Ianuare whan þat he for hire sente 2008
vp ryseþ Damyan þe nexte morwe
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe
he kembiþ him and proyneþ him and pikeþ
he doþ al þat þis lady lust and likeþ 2012
And ek to Ianuare he goþ as lowe
As euer did a dogge for þe bowe
he is so plesaunt vnto euery man
ffor craft is al who so þat it can 2016
þat euery wight is fayn to teche him good
And fully in his lady grace he stood
þus lete I Damyan aboute his neede
And my tale forþ I wil procede [leaf 155] 2020
Some clerkes halden þat felicite:
Stant in delite and perfore he
This noble Ianuare wiþ alle his might
In honeste wise as longeþ to a knight 2024
Schop him to lyue ful deliciously
his housynge his array al honestely
To his degre was maked as a kinges
Among oþir of his honeste þinges 2028

he hadde a gardyn walled al wiþ stoon
So fair a gardyn wot I nowher noon
ffor out of doute I verrayly suppose
þat he þat wroot þe romance of þe rose 2032
Ne couþe of it þe beaute wel deuyse
ne pryapus ne mighte nat suffise
þouȝ he be god of gardyns for to telle
The beaute of þe gardyn and of þe welle 2036
þat stood vnder a laurer alway greene
fful often tyme king Pluto and his queene
Preserpyna and alle hire fayerie
Disporten hem and maken melodye 2040
aboute þat welle and daunced as men tolde
þis noble knight þis Ianuare þe olde
Suche deynte haþ in it to walken and to pleye
þat he wol suffre no wight to bere þe keye 2044
Saue he himself or of þe smale wiket
he bar alwey of siluer a clyket
Wiþ þe whiche whan þat him lust vnschette
And whan þat he wolde paye his wijf his dette 2048
In scmer sesoñ þider wolde he go
And may his wijf and no wight but þay tuo
A þinges whiche þat were nouȝt don a bedde
þey in þe gardyn parformed han and spedde 2052
And in þis wise many a mery day
lyuede þis Ianuare and freissche may
But worldly ioye may nouȝt alwey endure
To Ianuare ne to no worldly creature [leaf 155, back] 2056
O sodeyn happ O þou fortune vnstable /
I-like to þe scorpioñ vnstable /
That flaterest wiþ þin heed whan þou wolt stynge
Thyn tayl is deþ þoruȝ þin enuenemynge 2060
O brutel ioye O swete poysoñ queynte
O mustier þat sotilly canst peynte
þine ȝiftes vnder þe hewe of stedefastnesse
þat þou disceyuedest boþe more and lesse 2064

Why hast þou Ianuare þus deceyued
And haddist him for þi fulle frend receyued
And now þou hast byraft him boþe his eyen
ffor sorwe of which desireþ he to deyen 2068
Allas þis noble Ianuare þat is so fre
Amydde his lust and his p*rosper*ite
Is woxen blynde and al sodeynly
his deþ þ*er*fore desireþ he outrely 2072
And þ*er* wiþ al þe fyr of Ielousye
leste þat his wijf schulde falle in som folye
So brent his herte þat he wolde fayn
That som man boþe hire and him hadde slayn 2076
ffor neuer [after] his deþ ne in his lyf
Ne wolde he þat sche were loue ne wyf
But euer lyue as a wydewe in cloþes blake
Soule as þe turtil doþ þat haþ lost hire make / 2080
But at þe laste after a monþe or tweye
his sorwe gan to swage soþ to seye
ffor when he wiste it/ may non oþer be
he paciently took his aduersite 2084
Saf out of doute may he nouȝt forgon
þat he nas Ielous euermore in oon
Which Ielousie it was so outrageous
þat neiþer in halle ne in non oþer hous 2088
he nolde suffre hire for to ryde ne go
Ne in non oþer place neuer þe mo
But if þat he hadde hond on hire alway
ffor which ful ofte wepeþ freisshe may [leaf 156] 2092
That loueþ Damyan so benignely
þat sche moot eyþer deye sodeinly
Or elles sche mote han him at hire leste
sche wayteþ whan hir herte wolde toberste 2096
vpon þat oþer syde Damyan
Bycomen is þe sorwfulleste man
þat euere was for neiþ*er* night nor day
Ne might he speke a word to freisshe may 2100

As to his purpos of no such matiere /
But if þat Ianuarie most it here /
þat hadde oon hond on hir euer mo
And naþeles by wrytyng to and fro 2104
And pryue signes wist he what sche ment/
And sche knew of þe signe of his entent
O Ianuarie what mighte þe affayle /
þou mightest see as fer as schippes sayle 2108
ffor a[s] good is a blynd disceyued be
As to be deceyued whan a man may se
Lo argus which þat hadde an C. eyen
ffor al þat euer he couþe poure or prien 2112
ȝit was he blent and god wot so ben mo
þat wenyn wisly þat it nys nat so
Passe ouer is an ese and say nomore
This freissche may of which I spak of yore 2116
In warm wax haþ emprynted þis cliket
þat Ianuarye bar of þis smale wyket
By which vnto his gardyn ofte he wente
And Damyan þat knew hire entente 2120
þe clyket countrefeted priuily
Ther nys no more to say but hastyly
Som wonder by his cliket schal betyde /
Which ȝe schullen heere if ȝe woln abyde 2124
O noble Ovyde soþ saist þou god wot
What sleight is it þough it be long and hoot
That he nyl fynde it out in som manere
By Pyramus and Thysbe may men leere [leaf 156, back]
þough þey were kepte ful longe streiȝt ouer al
þey ben acorded rownynge þurgh a wal
þer is no wight couþe han founde out such a sleiȝte
But now to purpos er þat dayes eyȝte 2132
Were passed or þe monþe of Iuyl byfille
þat Ianuarye haþ caught so gret a wille
þurgh eggyng of his wijf him for to pleye
In his gardyn and no wight but þey tweye 2136

That' in a morwe vnto his may sayde he
Rise vp my wijf/ my loue my lady fre
þe turtlis voys is herd my doufe sweete
The wynter is gon with alle his reynes weete 2140
Com forþ now wiþ þin eyen columbyne
how fairer ben þy brestes þan is wyne
þe gardyn is enclosed al aboute
Come forþ my white spouse out' of doute 2144
þou hast' me wounded in myn herte O wyf'
No spotte in þe nas in al þy lyf'
Com forþ and let vs taken oure disport
I chees þe for my wyff and my confort' 2148
Suche olde lowde wordes vsed he
On damyan a signe made sche
That' he schulde go biforn wiþ his clyket
þis damyan haþ opened þe wyket 2152
And in he sterte and þat' in such manere
þat' no wight' might' it se ne heere
And stille he sitt' vnder a bussch anon
This Ianuare so blynd as is a stoon 2156
Wiþ mayus in his hond and no wight' mo
In to his freisshe gardyn is he go
And clapte to þe wyket' sodeynly
Now wiff' q*uod* he her nys but þou and I 2160
þat' art' þe creature þat' I best loue
ffor by þat' lord þat' sitt' vs alle aboue
I hadde leuer deyen on a knyf'
Then þe offenden deere trewe wyf' [leaf 157] 2164
ffor goddes sake þenk' how I þe chees
Nouȝt' for no coueytise dowteles /
But' oonly for þe loue I hadde to þe
And þough þat' I be olde and may nouȝt' se 2168
Be to me trewe and I wol telle ȝou why
Certes þre þinges scholden ȝe wynne *þer*by
ffirst' loue of' crist' and to ȝour self' honour
And al myn heritage toun and tour 2172

I ȝiue it' ȝow makeþ Ch*art*res as ȝou leste
This schal be do to morwe er sonnes reste
So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse
And preye ȝou on couenaunt þat' ȝe me kisse 2176
And þough þat' I be Ielous wyte me nouȝt
ȝe ben so deepe enprynted in my þouȝt'
þat' whan þat' I considere ȝour beaute
And þer wiþ al þe vnlikly elde of' me 2180
I may nouȝt' certes þough I schulde deye
ffor-bere to ben out' of' ȝour companye
ffor verray loue þis is wiþouten doute
Now kisse me wijf' and let' vs rome aboute 2184
¶ This freissche may whan sche þis wordes herde /
Benignely to Ianuarye answerde
But' first' and forward sche bygan to weepe
I haue q*uod* sche a soule for to keepe 2188
As wel as ȝe and also myn honour
And of' my wifhede þilke tendre flour
Which þat' I haue asseured in ȝour hand
Whan þat' þe prest' to yow my body band 2192
Wher-fore I wol answere in þis manere
Wiþ þe leue of' ȝou my lord so deere
I p*ray* god þat' neuer dawe þat' day
þat' I ne sterue as foule as wo*m*man may 2196
If' euer I do vnto my kynne þat' schame /
Oþer elles I empeyre so my name /
þat' y be fals and if' I do þat' lak'
To strype me and putte me in a sakk' [leaf 157, back] 2200
And in þe nexte ryuer do me drenche
I am a gentil wo*m*man and no wenche
Why speke ȝe þus but' men ben euer vntrewe
And wo*m*men han reproef' of' ȝou ay newe 2204
ȝe can non oþer contynaunce I leeue
But' speke to vs as vntriste and in repreue
And wiþ þat' word sche saugh wher damyan
Sat in þe bussh̄ and knelen he bigan 2208

And wiþ hire fynger signes made sche
þat Damyan schulde clymbe vpon a tree
þat charged was wiþ fruyt and vp he wente
ffor verrayly he knew al hire entente 2212
And euery signe þat sche couþe make
Wel bet þan Ianuarye hir owne make
ffor in a l*ett*re sche hadde told him al
Of þis matiere how he worche schal 2216
And þus I lete him sitte in þe Pyry
And Ianuarye and mayus rownynge myry
¶ Bright was þe day and blew þe firmament
Phebus of gold doun haþ his stremes sent 2220
To gladen eu*er*y flour wiþ his warmnesse
he was þat tyme in Gemynys as I gesse
But litel fro his declynacioñ
Of Cancer Iouys exaltacioñ 2224
And so bifell*e* þat in a bright morwetyde
þat in þe gardyn on þat ferþer syde /
Pluto þat is þe king of fayerye
And many a lady in his companye 2228
ffolwyng his wyf þe queene p*ro*serpyna
Which þat he rauyssched out of P*ro*serpyna
Whiles þat sche gaderede floures in a mede
In Claudian ȝe may þe storyes rede 2232
how in his grysly carte he hire fette
This kyng of fayerie a doun him sette
vpon a benche of/ toruys freissch̃ and grene
And right anon seyde he þus to his queene [leaf 158] 2236
My wijf q*uod* he þat may no wight seye nay
þe exp*er*iens prouep it eu*er*y day
þe tresoun which þat wo*m*man doþ to man
Ten hundred þousand tellen I can / 2240
Notable of ȝour vntrouþe and brytilnes
O Salamon richest of all*e* richesse
ffulfild of sapience and of worldly glorie
fful worþy ben þyne wordes to memorie 2244

To eu*er*y wiȝht þat witt and resoñ can
þus preiseþ he ȝit þe bounte of man
Among a þousand men ȝit fond I on
But of alle wo*m*men fond he neuer noon 2248
þus seiþ þe king þat knoweþ ȝoure wickednes /
And Ih*esus* filius Cyrak as I ges /
Ne spekeþ of ȝou but seeldyn reuerens
A wilde fuyre a corumpte pestilens 2252
So falle vpon ȝour bodyes ȝit to nyght
Ne se ȝe nought þis honurable knight
By cause allas þat he is blynd and old
his owne man schal make him kokewold 2256
Lo wher he sitte þe lecchour in þe tree
Now wol I g*ra*unte of myn mageste
vnto þis olde blynde worþy knight
þat he schal han aȝein his eyȝen sight 2260
Whan þat his wijf wolde don him vylenye
þan schal he knowe al hire harlottrie
Boþe in repreef of hire and oþer mo
ȝe schal q*uod* Proserpyn and wol ȝe so 2264
Now by mo moodres syres soule I swere
þat I schal ȝeuyn hire suffisaunt answere
And alle wo*m*men after for ȝour sake /
þat þough þey ben in eny gilt y-take 2268
Wiþ face bold þei scholden hemself excuse
And bere hem doun þat wolden hem accuse /
ffor lakke of answere non of hem scholde deyen
Al hadde ȝe seye a þing wiþ boþe ȝour eyȝen [leaf 158, back]
ȝit schullen we so visagen it hardyly
And weepe and swere and chide subtyly
þat ȝe schuln ben as lewed as here gees
What rekkeþ me of ȝour auctoritees 2276
I wot wel þis Iewe þis Salamon
ffand of vs wo*m*men fooles many oon
But þough þat he ne fond no good wo*m*man
þer haþ I-founde many anoþer man 2280

Wo*m*men ful trewe ful good ful v*er*tuous
Witnesse on hem þat dwellen in cristes hous
Wiþ martirdom þey prouyd h*ir*[1] constance [[1] MS ħ]
þe Romayne Iestes maken rememb*r*ance 2284
Of many a verray trewe wijf also
but sire ne beþ nouȝt wroþ as be it so
þouȝ þat he seyde he fond no good wo*m*man
I pray ȝou take þe sentence of þe man 2288
he mente þus þat in souerayne bounte
Nis non but god but neyþer he ne sche
Ey for verray god þat nys but oon
What make ȝe so moche of Salamon 2292
What þoughh he made a temple goddes hous
What þoughh he were riche and glorious
So made he a temple of false godis
Who mighte do a þing þat more forbode is 2296
Parde as fayr as he his name in-plastre
he was a lecchour and an ydolastr*e*
And in his eelde he verry god forsook
And if þat god ne hadde as seiþ þe book 2300
y-spared him for his fadres sake he scholde
haue lost his regne sonner þan he wolde
I sette nouȝt of alle þe vylenye
þat ȝe of wo*m*men wite a bottirflye 2304
I am a wo*m*man needes moot I speke
Oþer elles swelle til myn herte breke
ffor siþenes he seyde þat we ben Iangeleresses
As euer mote I brouke boþe my tresses [leaf 159] 2308
I schal not spare for no curtesye
To speke him harm þat wolde vs vilanye
Dame q*uod* þis pluto be no lengere wroþ
I ȝiue it vp but seþens I swor my*n* oþ 2312
þat I wolde g*ra*unten him his sight aȝein
My word schal stonde þat warne I þe certayn)
I am a king it sitt me nouȝt to lye
And I q*uod* sche a queen of fayerye 2316

hire answere sche schal haue I vndertake
let vs no more wordes make 2318

[*For the rest of the Tale* (*from MS Arch. Seld. B.* 14) *see the Appendix.*]

[*THE PROEM.*]

¶ The p[ro]loge of þe ffr*ã*nkeleyn

Thise olde gentile britouns in here dayes [*on leaf* 159]
Of diuerse auentures maden layes
Rymeden in here firste britoun tonge
Whiche layes with here instrumentz þey songe 712
Oþer elles radden hem for here plesaunce
And on of hem haue I in remembraunce
Which I schal seye wiþ as good wille as I can
But sires by cause þat I am a burel man 716
At my begynnyng first I ȝou beseche
haueþ me excused of my rude speche
I lerned neuer rethorik certayn
þing þat I speke it mot be bare and playn 720
I slepte neuer on þe mount of p*er*naso
Ne neuer lered Marcus Thullius ne Cithero
Colours of Rethorik ne knowe I non wiþouten drede
But suche coloures as growen in þe mede 724
Oþir elles suche as men dye or peynte
Colours of Rethorik ben me to queynte
Myn spyrit feleþ nought of such matere
But if ȝe luste my tale schul ȝe not here 728

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther was a knight þat loued and did his peyne 730
In amoryke þat cleped is Briteyne 729
To seruen a lady in his beste wise
And many a labour and many a gret emp*r*ise 732

he for his lady wrouȝt er sche were wonne
ffor sche was on þe fairest vnder sonne [leaf 159, back]
And eck þerto come of so heih kynrede
That wel vnneþes durst þis knight for drede 736
Telle hire his wo his peyne and his distresse
But atte laste sche for his worþinesse
And namely for his meke obeissance
haþ such a pite caught of his penaunce 740
That priuely sche felle of his acord
To take him for hir housbonde and hire lord
Of such lordschipe as men han ouer here wyues
And for to lede þe more in blisse here lyues 744
Of his fre wille he swor hire as a knight
þat neuer in his wille by day ne by night/
Ne schulde he vpon him take no maystrie
Aȝeins hire wille ne kuyþe hire Ialousye 748
But hire obeye and folwe hire wille in al
As ony louere to his lady schal
Saue þat þe name of souereynete
That wolde he han for schame of his degre 752
Sche þankeþ him and wiþ ful gret humblesse
Sche sayde sire seþþen of your gentilnesse
ȝe profre me to han a large reyne
Ne wolde neuer god betwixe vs tweyne 756
As in my gilt were eyþer werre or stryf
Sire I wil be ȝour owne humble trewe wijf
haue here my trouþe til þat myn herte breste
Thus be þey boþe in quiete and in reste 760
ffor o þing syres saufly dar I seye
That frendes euerich oþer mote obeye
If þay wole longe holde companye
loue wol nought ben constreigned by maystrie 764
Whan maystrie comeþ þe god of loue anon
Beteþ on his wynges and fare wel he is gon
loue is a þing as any spiryt fre
Wommen of kynde desiren liberte 768

And nouȝt to be constreigned as a þral
And so do men if I þe soþe seye schal [leaf 160]
loke who þat is most pacient in loue /
he is at his auauntage aboue 772
Pacience is an heih vertu certeyn
ffor it venquissheþ as þese clerkes seyn
Thynges þat Rigor schulde neuer atteigne
ffor euery word men may nouȝt chyde ne pleyne / 776
lerneþ to suffre or elles so mote I gon
ȝe schullen it lerne wheþer ȝe wole or non
ffor in þis worlde certeyn no wight nys /
þat he ne doþ or saiþ sumtyme amys / 780
Or oþir siknesse oþer constillacioñ
Wyn wo or chaungyng of complexioñ
Causeþ ful often to don amys oþer speken
On euery wrong men may nouȝt ben awreken 784
After þe tyme moste be temperaunce
To euery wight þat can no gouernance /
And þerfore haþ þis worþy wise knight
To lyue in ese suffraunce hire behight 788
And sche to him ful wisly gan to swere
That neuer schulde þer be defaute in here /
here may men sen an humble wyse acord
Thus haþ sche take hir seruañt and hire lord 792
Seruaunt in loue and lord in mariage
Then was he boþe in lordschipe and seruage
Seruage nay but in lordschipe aboue
Seþyns þat he haþ boþe his lady and his loue 796
his lady certes and his wyf also
The whiche þat lawe of loue acordeþ þer to
And whan he was in þis prosperite
home wiþ his wyf he goþ to his cuntre 800
Nouȝt fer fro pedmark þer as his dwellyng was
Wher as he lyueþ in blisse and in solas
Who couþe telle but he hadde wedded be
þe ioye þe ese and þe prosperite / 804

That is bitwixe an housebond and his wyf
A ȝeer and more lasted þis blisful lijf [leaf 160, back]
Til þat þis knight of which I spak of þus
þat of kynrede was cleped arneragus 808
Schope him to gon and dwelle a ȝeer or tweyne
In engelond þat cleped eek was bretayne
To seche in armes worschipe and eek hono*ur*
ffor all*e* his lust he sette in such labour 812
And dwelleþ þere þe book saiþ þus
Now wol I stynte of þis arneragus
And speken I wole of dorygen his wijf
þat loueþ hir housbonde as hire hertes lyf 816
And for his absens wepeþ sche and sikeþ /
As don þese noble wyues when hem likeþ
Sche mourneþ wakeþ wayleþ fasteþ & pleyneþ
Desïre of his p*re*sence hire so destreyneþ 820
That all*e* þis wyde world sche sette at nouȝt
hire freendes which þat knewe hire heuy þouȝt
Conforted hire in al þat euer þey mighte or may
They prechen hire þay tellen hire night and day 824
þat causeles sche sleeþ hire self allas /
And eu*e*ry confort possible in þis cas
þey don to hire wiþ all*e* here busynes /
And all*e* to make hire lete hir heuynes 828
By p*ro*cesse as ȝe knowe wel eu*er*ychon
Men may so longe grauen in þe ston
Til som figure þ*er*inne enprentyd be
So longe han þey conforted hire þat sche 832
Receyued haþ by hope and by resoñ
The empryntyng of hir constillacioñ
Thurgh which hire grete sorwe gan aswage /
Sche may nought alway endure in such a rage / 836
And eek arneragus in al þis care
haþ sent his l*ett*res home in al þis fare
And þat he wolde come hastly aȝayn
Oþer hadde þis sorwe hire herte slayn 840

hire frendes sawe hire herte gan to slake /
And preyed hire on knees for goddes sake [leaf 161]
To come and rome hire in companye
Away to dryue hire derke fantasye 844
And fynally sche g*ra*unted þat requeste
ffor wel sche sawe it was for þe beste
Now stood hire castel faste by þe see
And often wiþ hire freendes walked sche 848
hire to disporte on þe banke on heih
Wher as sche many schippe and barge seih
Seylinge here cours where hem luste to go
But ȝit was þere a parcelle of hir wo 852
ffor to hir self ful often seyde sche
Is þer no schipp*e* of so many as I se
Wole brynge home my lord þen wolde myn herte
Al waryssche of þis bitter peynes smerte 856
Anoþer tyme þer wole sche sitte and þinke
And caste hire eyen dounward fro þe brynke
But whan sche saugh þe grisly rokkes blake
ffor verray fere so wolde hire herte quake 860
þat on hire feet sche mighte nought hire sustene
Thenne wolde sche sitte a doun vpon þe grene
And pitously in to þe see byholde
And sayn right þus wiþ sorowful hertes colde 864
Eterne god þat þurgh þy puruyaunce
ledest þe world by certein gou*er*naunce
In ydelnesse as men sayn ȝe no þing make
But lord þese grisely feendly rokkes blake 868
That semen raþer a foul confusioñ
Of werk þen any fayr creacioñ
Of whiche a parfyt god and a stable
Why han ȝe wrouȝt þis werk vnresonable 872
ffor by þis werke south north est and west
Ther nys y-fostred man ne bryd ne best
hit doþ no good to my witt but annoyeþ
Se ȝe nouȝt lorde how mankynde it destroyeþ 876

An hundred þousand bodyes of mankynde /
han rokkes slayn al be þey nouȝt in mynde [leaf 161, back]
Which mankynde is a fair part of þy werk
That þou it madest y-like to þin hond werk 880
Thenne semed it ȝe hadde a gret chierte
Toward mankynde but how þan may it be
That ȝe suche menys make it to distroyen
Whiche menys doþ no good but euer annoyen 884
I wot wel clerkes woln sayn as hem leste
By argumentz þat al þing is for þe beste
Though I ne can þe causes for soþe knowe
but þilke god þat made wynd to blowe 888
As kepe my lord þis is my conclusioñ
To clerkes lete I al disputacioñ
But wolde god þat alle þe rokkes blake
Were sonken in to helle for his sake / 892
These rokkes sleen myn herte for feere
Thus wolde sche sayn with many a pitous teere
hire freendes sawe þat nas no disport
To romen by þe see but discomfort 896
And schopen for to pleyen som where elles /
þey leden hire by Ryueres and by welles
And eek in oþer places delitables
þey daunce and pleye at Chesse and at tables 900
So on a day right on þe morne tyde
vnto a gardyne þat was right þere besyde
In which þat þey hadde made here ordynañce
Of vitaile and of oþer puruyaunce 904
They gon and pleyen hem al þe longe day
And þis was on þe sixte morwe of may
Which may hadde peynted wiþ his softe schoures /
This gardyn ful of leues and of floures 908
And wiþ crafte of mannes hande so curiously
Arayed haþ þis gardyn trayelly
That neuer nas þer gardyn of such prys
But if it were þe verrey paradys 912

The odure of floures and þe freisshe sight /
Wolde han made ony pensyf herte light [leaf 162]
That euer was born / but if to gret siknesse /
Oþer to gret sorwe hyld it in distresse / 916
And after dynere gan þey to daunce 918
So ful it was of beaute with plesaunce / 917
And synge also but dorigen allone
Sche made alwey hire compleynt and hire mone 920
ffor sche ne saugh him on þe daunce go
þat was hire housbond and hir loue also
But naþeles sche moste a tyme abyde /
And with good hope sche let hir sorwe glyde 924
vpon þis daunce amonges oþer men
Daunced a squier biforen Dorigen
That freisscher was and iolyer of array
As to my dome þan is þe monþe of May 928
he syngeþ and dauncеþ passyng any man
That is or was siþenes þis world bygan
Ther wiþ he was if men schulde him discryue /
On þe beste farynge man on lyue / 932
ȝong strong right vertuous riche and wys
And wel biloued and holden in gret prys
And schortliche if þe soþe telle I schal
vnwytyng of þis Dorigen at al 936
This lusty squyer seruaunt to venus
Which þat y-cleped was Aurelius
had loued hire best of eny creature
Tuo ȝeer and more as was his aduenture / 940
But neuer durste he telle hire of his greuance
Wiþoute cuppe he drank al his penaunce
he was dispeyred no þing durst he seye
Saue in his sawe somwhat wolde he wreye 944
his woo as in general compleynyng
he sayde he louede and was biloued noþing
Of such matiere made he many layes
Songes compleigntes roundeletis virrelayes 948

how þat he durste nouȝt his sorwe telle /
That langusshiþ as fuyre doþ in helle [leaf 162, back]
And deye seyde he moste as did Ekko
ffor narsisus þat durste nouȝt telle hir wo 952
In oþer manere þenne ȝe here me seye
Ne durst he nouȝt to hire his wo bewreye
Saue p*er*aduent*ur*e som tyme at daunces
There ȝong folk kepen here obs*er*uaunces 956
hit may wel be he loked on hire face
In such a wise as man þat askeþ grace
But no þing wiste sche of his entent
Naþeles it happed or þey þennes went 960
By cause þat he was hire neyȝebo*ur*re /
And was a man of worschipe and hono*ur*
And hadde knowen him ofte tymes ȝore /
þey felle in speche ofte more and more / 964
vnto his purpos drowe aurelius
And whan he saw his tyme he sayde þus
Ma dame q*uod* he by god þat þis world made
So þat I wiste it mighte ȝour herte glade 968
I wolde þat day þat ȝoure arneragus /
Wente on þe see þat I aurelius
had went þat I schulde neuer haue come aȝain
ffor wel I woot my seruise is in vayn 972
My guerdoñ nys but berstyng of myn herte /
Ma dame reweþ vpon my peynes smerte
ffor as wiþ a swerd ȝe may me sle or saue
her at ȝoure foot god wolde þat/ I were graue / 976
I haue as now no more leysir for to seye /
haue mercy on me swete or ȝe wolen do me deye
Sche gan to loke vpon aurelius
Is þis ȝoure wille q*uod* sche and say ȝe þus 980
Neuer erst q*uod* sche ne wist I what ȝe mente
But now Aurely I knowe ȝoure entente
By þilke god þat ȝaf me soule and lyf
Ne schal I neuer be vntrewe wyf 984

In word ne in werk' as fer as I haue wit' /
I wole ben his to whom þat' I am knyt' [leaf 163]
But after þat' in pleyn þus seyde sche / 988
Tak' þis for fynal answer as for me / 987
Aurely q*uod* sche by hihe god aboue
ȝit' wol I g*ra*unte ȝou to be ȝoure loue
Seþyns I ȝou se so pitously compleyne /
loke what' day þat' engelond is Bryteyne / 992
ȝe remewe alle þe rokkes ston by stoon
þat' þay ne lette schip no boot' to goon
I say whan ȝe han made þese costes so clene
Of' Rokkes þat' þer nys no ston y-sene / 996
þan wol I loue ȝou best/ of' any man
haue here my troupe in al þat' euer I can
Is þere non oþer grace q*uo*d he /
No by þat' lord quod sche þat' made me 1000
ffor wel I wot' þat' þat' schal neuer betyde
let' such folye out' of' ȝour herte glyde
What' deynte schulde man haue by his lijf'
ffor to loue anoþ*er* mannes wyf' 1004
That' haþ hir body whan so þat' him likeþ
Aurelius ful ofte sore sikeþ /
Wo was aurely whan þat' he þis herde /
And wiþ a sorwful herte þus answerde / 1008
ma dame q*uo*d he þis were impossible /
Thenne mot' I deye on sodeyn deþ orrible /
And wiþ þat' word he torned him anon
þo came hire oþer frendes many oon 1012
And in þe aleyes romed vp and doñ
And no þing' wiste of' þis conclusioñ
But' sodeinly bygan to reuel newe /
Til þat' þe brighte sonne loste his hewe / 1016
ffor thorisowte haþ raft' þe sonne his lig̃ht'
þis is as moche to say as it was nig̃ht'
And home þey gon in Ioye and in solas /
Saue oonly wrecched aurelius allas / 1020

he to his hous is gon wiþ sorwful herte
he seiþ he may not fro his deþ asterte [leaf 163, back]
him semeþ he feliþ his herte colde
vp to þe heuene his handes gan he holde 1024
And on his knees bare he sette him doñ
And in his rauynge sayde his orisoñ
ffor verray wo out of his witte he breyde /
he nyste nouȝt what he spak but þus he seyde 1028
Wiþ pitous herte haþ he his compleint bygonne
vnto þe goddesse and first vnto þe sonne
he sayde appollo god and gouernour
And euery plaunte herbe tre and flour 1032
þat ȝeuest after þi declinacioñ
To ilk of hem his tyme and his sesoun
And þin herborwe chaungeþ lowe and heiȝe
lord Phebus cast þin merciable eyȝe 1036
On wrecched Aurely þat am but lorn
lo lord my lady haþ my deþ y-sworn
Wiþouten gilt but þin benignite
vpon my dedly herte haue sum pite 1040
But wel I wot lord Phebus if ȝou leste
ȝe may me helpe saue my lady beste
Now voucheþ sauf þat I may ȝou deuyse
how þat I may be holpe and in what wyse 1044
ȝoure blisful suster lucyna þe schene .i. luna lucyna.
þat of þe see is cheef goddesse & queene
Though Neptunus haue deyte in þe see
ȝit Emperesse abouen him is sche / 1048
ȝe knowen wel lord right as hire desire
Is to be quyked and leteþ of ȝoure fire
ffor which sche folweþ ȝou ful besyly
Right so þe see desireþ naturelly 1052
To folwen hire as sche þat is goddesse
Boþe in þe see and in Ryueres more and lesse
Wher-fore lord Phebus þis is myn requeste
Do þis myracle or I do myn herte to breste 1056

þat' þou next' at' þis apposicioun
Which in þe signe schal be of' þe leoun [leaf 164]
And preyed hire so gret' a flood to brynge
That' .v. fatheme at' þe leste it' ouer springe 1060
þe hyeste rokke in armorik' Britayne
And lete his flood endure ȝeres twayne
Thenne certes to my lady may I saye
holdeþ ȝoure hestes þe rokkes ben awaye 1064
lord Phebus do þis myracle for me
Pray hire sche go no faster cours þan ȝe
I say ȝou þus pray ȝour suster þat' sche go
None faster cours þan ȝe þis ȝeres tuo 1068
Then schal sche be euer at' þe fulle alway
And springe flood lasten boþe nigh't' and day
And but' sche fouche sauf' in such manere
To graunte me my lady souerein dere / 1072
Preye hire to synken euery rokke a doun
In to hire owne darke Regioñ
vnder þe grounde þer Pluto duelleþ Inne
Oþer neuer more schal I my lady wynne 1076
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barfoot' seeke
lord Phebus seeþ þe teeres on my cheeke /
And of' my peyne haue compassioñ
And wiþ þat' word in swowne he felle a doun 1080
And long' tyme he lay in a traunce
his broþer which þat' knew of' his penaunce
vp caught' him and to bedde him broughte
Dispeyred in his torment and in his þought 1084
Lo y þis woful creature lete lye
Chese he for me wheþer he wol lyue or dye
Arneragus wiþ hele and gret' honour
As he was of' Chyualry þe flour 1088
Is comen home and oþere worþy men
O blisful art' þou Dorigen
þat' hast' þin lusty housbonde in þin armes
þe freissche knight þe worþy man of' armes 1092

That louep þe as his owen hertes lyf
No þing luste he to be ymaginatyff [leaf 161, back]
Of any wight hadde spoke while he was oute
To hire of loue he made þer-of no doute 1096
he nouȝt entendeþ to no such matere
But dauncep Iustiþ and makeþ good cheere
As þus in Ioye and blisse I lete hem dwelle
And of þe swete Aurelyus wol I telle 1100
In langure and in furious tormentz þus
Tuo ȝer and more lay wrecche aurelius
Or ony foot on erþe he mighte gon
No confort in þis tyme nade he non 1104
Saue of his broþer which þat was a clerk
he knew of al þis wo and of al þis werk
ffor to non oþer creature certeyn
Of þis matiere ne durste he no word seyn 1108
vnder his brest he bar it more secre
Then euer did Pamphilius for Galathe
his brest was hole wiþouten for to sene
But in his herte was ay þe arwe kene 1112
And wel ȝe knowen þat a sore sauure
In surgerie ful *per*ilous is þe cure
But man might touche þe arwe or come *þer*by
his bro*þer* wepeþ and wayleþ priuyly 1116
Til atte laste him fell*e* in rememb*ra*unce
That whiles he was at Orlyaunce in ff*ra*unce
As ȝonge clerkes þat ben likerous
To reden artes þat ben curious 1120
Seken in euery halk and euery herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne
he him remembreþ vpon a day
At Orlyaunce in studye a book he say 1124
Of magiq*ue* naturell which his felawe
That was þat tyme a bachiler of lawe
Al were he þere to lerne ano*þer* craft
And priuely vpon his deske y-laft 1128

This book' spak' mochil of' þis operacioñs
Touchynge þe .xviij. mancioñs [leaf 165]
That' longen to þe mone and suche folye
As in oure dayes nys nought' worþ a flye 1132
ffor holy chirche saiþ in oure byleeue
Ne suffreþ non illusioñ vs to greeue
And whan þis book' was in remembraunce
Anon for ioye he gan for to daunce 1136
And to himselue sayde pryuely
My broþer schal be warisshed hastily
ffor I am siker þat' þer ben sciences
By whiche men maken dyuerse apparences / 1140
Whiche as þe subtile tregetoures pleyen
ffor ofte at' festes herde I seyen
That' tregettours wiþinne an halle large
han made in come water and a barge / 1144
And in þe halle rowen vp and doun
Som tyme haþ semed a grym leoun
[and somtyme flouris springe / as in a mede [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
somtyme a vyne & grapes / white & rede]
Som tyme a castel al of' lym and ston
And whan hem liked voyded it anon
þus semed it' to euery mannes sight'
Now þenne conclude I þus if' þat' I might' 1152
At' Orliaunce som olde felawe I-fynde
That' hadde þe moones mancioun in mynde
Oþer magike naturel aboue
he scholde wel make my broþer han his loue / 1156
ffor wiþ apparens a man may make
To mannes sight' þat' alle þe Rokkes blake
Of' Britaigne were y-went' euerychon
And schippes by þe brinke mighte comen and goon 1160
And in such forme endure a ȝeer or tuo
þen were my broþer warissched of' his wo
þen most' sche needes knowen hire byheste
Or elles he schal schamen hire at' þe leste 1164

What schulde I make a lenger tale of þis
Vnto his broþer bedde come he is
And such confort he ȝaff him for to gon
To Orlyaunce þat he vpstarte anon [leaf 165, back] 1168
And on his way forþward is he fare
In hope to ben y-lissed of his care /
When þay were come almost to þat Cite
But if it were a tuo forlong oþir þre 1172
A ȝong clerk romyng by himself þey mette
Which þat in latyn thriftily hem grette
And after þat he sayde a wonder þing
I knowe quod he þe cause of ȝoure comyng 1176
And er þey forþer any foote went
he tolde hem alle þat was in here entent
This brytoun clerk him asked of felawes
The which þat he had knowen in olde dawes 1180
And he answerde him þat þey dede were /
ffor which he wepe ful ofte many a tere
Doun of his hors Aurelius light anon
And forþ wiþ þis magicien forþ is he gon 1184
home to his hous and made hem wel at ese /
hem lacked no vitayle þat hem might plese /
So wel arrayed hous as þer was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh noon 1188
He schewed him er he wente to sopere
fforestes parkes ful of wilde deere
[there saw he hartes / with hornys ful highe [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14.]
pasturynge right faire / & merilie 1192
he saw of hem an hundred / sleyn with houndes
and so*m*me with arwis blede / & bitt*er* woundes
he saw when voided were / the wilde dere
these ffaukeners / vppon a faire Rivere] 1196
And how ffaukons han þe heron slayne
Then sawe he knightes iusten in a playne
And after þis he dide him such plesaunce
That he him schewed his lady in a daunce 1200

On which himself' he daunced as him þought
And whan þis mayster þat' þis magiq*ue* wrought
Sawh it' was tyme to clappe his hondes tuo
And fare wel al oure reuel is y-do 1204
And ȝit/ remewe þey neuer out' of' þis hous /
Whiles þey sawe al þis sight' merueylous
But' in his study þer as his bookes be
þey saten stille and no wight' but' þey þre 1208
To him his mayster called þanne a squiere
And seyde him þus is redy oure sopere [leaf 166]
Almost' an hour it' is I vndertake
Seþyns I ȝou bad oure souper to make 1212
When þat' þis worþy men wenten with me
vnto my study þer as my bokes be
Sire q*uod* this squyer when it' likeþ ȝou
It' is al redy þey ȝe wolen right' now / 1216
Go we þen soupe q*uod* he and for þe beste /
These auerous folk' som tyme mote haue reste
And after souper felle þey in trete
What' so*m*me schulde þis maystres guerdoñ be / 1220
Te remewe all*e* þe rokkes of' Brytaigne
And eek' fro Geroun to þe mouþ of' Sayne
he made it' straunge / and swore so god him saue
lasse þan a þousand pound he nolde nouȝt' haue 1224
Ne gladly for þat' so*m*me ne wolde he gon
Aurelius wiþ blisful herte anon
Answerde þus fy on a þousand pound
þis wyde worlde þat' men seyn is round 1228
þat' wolde I ȝiue if' I were lord of' it'
This bargayn is ful dryue for we be knyt /
ȝe schulle be payed trewely by my trouþe
But' lokeþ now for no necligence or slouþe 1232
ȝe tary vs heere no lenger þan to morwe
Nay quod þis clerk' haue heer my trouþe to borwe
To bedde is gon aurelius whan him liste
And wel neigh al þat' night' he hadde his reste 1236

That for his labour and for his hope of blisse
his woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse
vpon þis morwe when þat it was day
To Britaigne toke þay þe rightе way 1240
Aurelius and þis magicien besyde
And ben descendid þer þey woln abyde
And þis was as þe bokes me remembre
þe colde frosty sesoun of Decembre 1244
Phebus wax olde and hewed lik latoun
That in his hoote declinacioñ [leaf 166, back]
Schon as þe burnyd gold wiþ stremes bright
But now in Scorpioñ a doun he light 1248
Wher as he schon ful pale I dar wel sayn
The bitter frostes wiþ þe slete and rayn
Destroyed haþ þe grene in eu*er*y ȝerde /
Ianus sit by þe furye wiþ double berde 1252
And drynkeþ of his bugle horn þe wyn
Biforn him stant þe braun of tuxed swyn
And a nowel cryeþ eu*er*y lusty man
Aurelius in al þat euer he can 1256
Doþ to his maister cheere and reu*er*ence
And preyeþ him to don his diligence
To bryngen him out of his peynes smerte
Or wiþ a swerd þat he wolde slitte his herte 1260
þat subtil clerk which þat rouþe hadde of þis man
þat night and day he him spedde þat he ne lan
To wayte a tyme of his conclusioñ
This is to say to make illusioun 1264
I ne can no termes of astrologie / 1266
By which an apparence of Iogellerie / 1265
That sche and eu*er*y wight scholde wene and seye
þat of Britaigne þe rokkes were aweye 1268
Oþer elles þey were sonken vnder grounde
So atte laste whan þat he his tyme fonde
To make his Iapes and his wrecchednes
Of which a sup*er*sticious cursednesse 1272

his tables colletanes forþ he broughtˡ
fful wel corrected ne þer lakked nouȝt/
Ne his collectes ne his expans ȝeres
Ne his rotes ne his oþer geres / 1276
As ben his centrys and his argumentz
And his p*ro*porcions conuenientz
ffor his equacioñs in euery þingˡ
And by his viij spe*re* in his werkynge 1280
he knew how fer Alnaþe was y-schoue
ffro þe hede ofˡ þilke fixe aries aboue [leaf 167]
Thatˡ in þe ix^e^ spere considered is
fful subtilly he calkeþ al þis / 1284
And whan he hadde founde his firste mansioñ
he knewe þe remenauntˡ by p*ro*porcioñ
And knewe þe arisyngˡ of/ þe mone wel
And in whos face and terme eu*er*y del 1288
And knew ful wel þe moones mansioñ
acordañt to his op*er*acioñ
And knew also his oþer obs*er*uaunces /
ffor suche illusions and suche meschaunces / 1292
As heþin folk vsed þilke dayes
ffor whiche no lenger maked he delayes
Butˡ þough his magikˡ for a wike or tweye /
Itˡ semed as all*e* þe rokkes were aweye 1296
Aurelyus which þatˡ dispeyred is
Wheþer he schal han his loue or fare amys
Awayteþ nightˡ and day ofˡ þis myracle /
And whan he knewe þatˡ þer was non obstacle 1300
þatˡ voyded were þise rokkes eu*er*ychon
Doun to þis maistres feetˡ he felle anon
And seyde I woful wrecche aurelius
þanke ȝou lord and lady my*n* venus 1304
That me han holpe fro my cares colde /
And to þe temple forþ his way haþ holde
Where he knewe he scholde his lady se
And whan he saugh his tyme anon right he 1308

Wiþ dredful herte and humble cheere /
Salued haþ his sou*er*ayn lady deere /
My rightful lady q*uod* þis woful man
Whom I most drede and loue as I best kan 1312
And loþest were of alle þis world displese /
Nere it þat I for ȝou haue suche disese
That I moste dye her at ȝour foot anon
But not wolde I telle how me is wo bygon 1316
But certes eyþer most I deye or pleyne /
ȝe sleen me gilteles for v*er*rey peyne / [leaf 167, back]
But of my deþ þough ȝe haue no rouþe
Auyseþ ȝou er þat ȝe lese ȝour trouþe 1320
Repentiþ ȝou for þilke god aboue /
Or ȝe me sleen by cause þat I ȝou loue /
ffor ma dame wel ȝe wot þat ȝe han hight
Nought/ þat I chalenge eny þing of right 1324
Of ȝou souereyne lady but ȝoure grace
But in a gardyn ȝonde at such a place
ȝe wot right wel þat ȝe behighte me
And in myn hande my trouþe plighte me 1328
To loue me best god wot ȝe sayde so
Al be þat I vnworþy am þerto
Madame I speke it for þe honour of ȝow
More þen to saue myn hertes lyf right now / 1332
I haue don so as ȝe haue co*m*manded me
And if ȝe vouche sauf ȝe may go se /
And as ȝou luste haueþ ȝoure byheste in mynde
ffor quyk or deed right þus ȝe schulle me fynde 1336
In ȝow liþ al to do me lyue or deye
But wel I wot þe rokkes ben aweye /
he took his leeue and sche astoned stood
In alle hir face þer nas a drop of blood 1340
Sche wende neuer han comyn in such a trappe
Allas quod sche þat þis euer schulde happe
ffor wende I neuer by possibilite
þat such a muster or such a meruaile schulde be 1344

It is azein þe *pro*cesse of nature[1] [[1] *These lines are transposed in the MS.*]
And home sche goþ a sorwful creature[1]
ffor verray feere vnneþes may sche go
Sche wepeþ and wayleþ a day or tuo 1348
And swowneþ þat it rouþe was to se
But why it was to no wight tolde sche
ffor out of toune was gon arneragus
But to hir self sche sayde and spak þus 1352
In hire compleynt as ȝe schullen aft*er* heere
Wiþ face pale and wiþ sorweful cheere [leaf 168]
Allas q*uod* sche on þe fortune I pleyne
That vnwar hast wrapped me in þi cheyne 1356
ffor which þe eschape wot I no socour
Saue oonly deþ oþer elles dishono*ur*
On of þese tuo bihoueþ me to chese
But naþeles ȝit hadde I leuer to lese / 1360
My lif þan of my body to han a schame
Oþer knowe my self fals oþer lese my name /
And wiþ my deþ I may be quyte y-wys
haþ þer nouȝt many a wyf er þis 1364
And many a mayden y-slayn hem self allas
Raþir þan wiþ here bodyes don trespas
And certes lo þise stories beren witnesse
Whan xxx tyrauntz ful of cursednesse 1368
hadde slayn Phydon in athenes atte leste
þey comaunded his douȝtres to areste /
And bryngen hem byforn hem in dispyt
Al naked to fulfille here foule delyt 1372
And in here fadres blod þey made hem daunce
vpon þe pament god ȝeue hem meschaunce
ffor whiche þese woful maydens ful of drede /
Raþer þan þey wolde lese here maydenhede / 1376
þay pryuely ben stert in to a welle /
And dreynt hemselue as þe bookes tell
They of mesue lete enquere and seke
Of lacedemye .L. maydens eeke 1380

On which þey wolden don here leccherie
But was þer non of al þat companye /
þat sche nas slayn and wiþ a glad entent
Chese raþir for to dye þan for to assent 1384
To ben oppressed of here maydenhede
Why schulde I þanne to deye ben in drede
lo eke þe tyraunt Anstoclydes
þat loued a mayde þat/ hight Symphalides 1388
Whan þat hir fader slayn was on a night/
vnto þe Dyanes temple goþ sche anon right [leaf 168, back]
hente þe ymage with hire armes tuo
ffro which ymage wolde sche neuere go 1392
No wight might of hit hir armes race
Til sche was slayn in þe selue place /
Now seþyns þat maydens hadde such despit/
To ben defouled wiþ mannes foul delyt 1396
Wel aught a wyf raþer hirself to sle/
þan ben defouled as þenkeþ me
þat schal I sayn of hasdrubaldes wyf
That/ at kartage byraft hir self hir lyf 1400
ffor whan sche sawh þat/ Romayns wan þe toun
Sche took hir children alle and swept a doun
In to þe fuyr and ches raþer to dye
þan eny Romeyn did hir vilanye 1404
haþ nouȝt lucres y-slayn hir self allas
At Rome þere sche oppressed was
Of Tarquyn for hir þought it was a schame /
To lyue whan þat sche had lost hire name / 1408
The viij. maydens of Milesye also /
han slayn hem self for drede and for wo
Raþir þan folke of gaule scholde hem oppresse /
Mo þen a þousend stories as I gesse / 1412
Couþe I now telle as touchinge þis matere
Whan habradas was slayn his wyf so dere
hire self slough and let hir blood to glyde
In habradas woundes brode and wyde / 1416

And seyde my body at þe leste way
þer schal no wight defoule it if þat I may
What schulde I mo ensamples her of sayn
Siþþen þat so many han hemselue slayn 1420
Wel raþer þan þey wolde defouled be /
I wol conclude what is best for me
[to sle my selue / than be defouled thus [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
I wol be trewe / to Arueragus] 1424
Oþir raþer sle my self in som manere
As Demonicious doughter dere
By cause þat sche nolde not defouled be /
O Cedasus it is ful gret pite [leaf 169] 1428
To reden how þi doughtren deyeden allas
þat slowe hemself for such a maner caas
As gret appetyt was it or more
The Theban mayden þat for Nichasore 1432
[hir selue slowe / right for suche manere woo [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
another Theban maiden dide right so]
hire hadde wedded and y-dressed [*spurious*]
ffor on of Macedoigne hadde hire opp*r*essed 1435
þat schal I sayn of Nicharatiffs wijf
þat for such cas byrafte hir self hir lyf
how trewe was eek to alcebiades
his loue þat for to deyen chees 1440
þan for to suffren his body vmbreyde be
lo which a wyf was Alcestem q*uod* sche
What Emore of good Penolope /
Al Grece knoweþ of hir chastite 1444
P*ar*dee of leodomia is write þus
That when at Troye was slayn protheselayus
No lenger nolde sche lyue after his day
The same of noble Porcia I telle may 1448
Wiþoute Brutus couþe sche not lyue
To whom he hadde al hol his herte ȝiue
The parfyt wyfhod of archemesy
honoured is þurgh al þe Barbary 1452

O teuta queen in þy wyfly chastite
To alle wyfes may a myrour be
[. . . *no gap in the MS: these lines*
. . . . *known only in Ellesmere MS.*] 1456
þus playned Dorigen a day or tweye
Purposed eu*e*re þat sche wolde deye
But naþeles vpon þe þridde night
hom cam arneragus þe worþy knight 1460
And asked hire why þat sche weep so sore
And sche gan weepen euer lenger þe more
Allas q*uod* sche þat euer was I born
þus haue I seyd q*uod* he þus haue I sworn 1464
I told him alle as ȝe han herde bifore
It needeþ nouȝt/ to rehersen it nomore
This housbond wiþ glad cheere in sondry wise /
Answerd and sayde as I schal ȝou deuyse / [leaf 169, back]
Is þer ought elles Dorigen but þis
Nay nay q*uod* sche god help me so as wis
This is to meche and it were goddes wille
ȝe wyf q*uod* he let slepe þat is stille 1472
It may be wel ȝit p*er*aduenture to say
ȝe schullen ȝour trouþe holden by my fay
ffor god so wisly helpe me
I hadde wel leuere y-stiked for to be / 1476
ffor verray loue which þat I to ȝou haue
But if ȝe schulde ȝoure trouþe saue
Trouþe is ȝe heihest þing þat man may kepe
But wiþ þat word he brast anon to weepe / 1480
And sayde I ȝou forbede vp payne of deþ
That neuer whiles þe lasteþ lyf and breþ
To no wight telle how þat þis matere /
As I may kepe I wole my woo endere 1484
Ne make no contynaunce of heuynesse
That folk of ȝou may deme harme or gesse
And forþ he cleped a squyer and a mayde
Goþ forþ anon wiþ Dorigen he sayde / 1488

And bringeþ hire to such a place anon
þey tooke her leue and on þair way þey gon
But' þey ne wiste why sche þider wente
he nolde no wight' telle hire entente 1492
[. . . . . [Not in Arch. Seld. B. 14. These lines known only in the Ellesmere MS.]
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. 1496
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
This squyer which þat' hight' Aurelyus
On Dorigen which þat' was so amerous 1500
Of' aduenture happed hire to mete
Amyd þe toun right' in þe quyke strete
As sche was boun to gon þe wey forþ right
Toward þe gardyn þer as sche hadde hight' 1504
And he was to þe gardynward also
ffor wel he spyed whan sche wolde go
Out' of' hir hous to eny maner place
But' þus þey mette of' auenture or of' g*rac*e 1508
And he saluyþ hire wiþ glad entent'
And axed of' hire whider þat' sche wente / [leaf 170]
And sche answerde half' as sche were mad
vnto þe gardyn as my*n* housbonde bad 1512
My trouþe for to holde allas allas
Aurelius gan wonder of' þis caas
And in his herte had gret compassioñ
Of' hire and of' hire lamentacioñ 1516
And of' Arneragus þe worþy knight'
And bad hire holde al þat' sche hight'
So loþ he was his wif' schulde breke hir trouþe
And in his herte he caste of' þis gret' rouþë[1] [1 *blots over* e *later*]
Considerynge þe beste on eu*er*y syde /
That' fro his luste were him better abyde
Than don so heigh a cherles wrecchednes
Aȝeins fraunchise and aȝein al gentilnes 1524

ffor which in fewe wordes sayde he þus
Ma dame seiþ to ȝoure lord Arneragus
þat sepyns I se þis grete gentilnes /
To ȝou and ek I se wel ȝoure distres 1528
þen ȝe to me þus schulde breke ȝoure trouþe 1530
Certes me þinkeþ it were right gret rouþe [*spurious* 1529]
I haue wel leuer euer to suffre wo
þen I departe þe loue betwixe ȝou tuo 1532
I ȝou relesse ma dame in to ȝoure hand
Quyte eu*er*y surement and eu*er*y band
That ȝe han made to me as here byforn
Siþens þilke tyme that ȝe were born 1536
My trouþe I pligħt I schal ȝou neuer repreue
Of no biheste and here I take my leue /
As of þe trewest and þe beste wyf
þat euer ȝit/ I knew in al my lyf 1540
But euery wigħt be war of hire byheste
On Dorigen remembreþ atte leste /
Thus can a squier don a gentil dede
As wel as can a knight wiþouten drede 1544
Sche þanked him vppon hir knees al bare
And home vnto hire housbonde is sche fare [leaf 170, back]
And tolde hem all*e* as ȝe han herde me sayde
And be ȝe siker he was so wel a-payde / 1548
þat it were inpossible to write /
What schulde I lengere of þis cas endite /
Arneragus and dorigen his wijff
In souerayn blisse leden forþ here lyff 1552
Neuer eft ne was þer anger hem betwene
he cherisscheþ hire as þoughħ sche were a quene
And sche was to him trewe for euermore 1555
Aurelius þat his cost haþ al forlore 1557
Curseþ þe tyme þat euer he was y-born 1558
ffor certes he seiþ I am forlorn [*spurious*]
Allas q*uod* he allas þat I behigħt
Of pured gold a þousand pound of wigħt/ 1560

vnto þis philosofre how schal I do
I se no more but þat I am fordo /
Myn heritage moot I needes selle
And ben a beggere here may I no lenger dwelle 1564
And schamen al my kynrede in þis place
But I of him may gete bettre grace /
[but natheles / I wol of him assaye [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
at certeyne dayes / yere bi yere to paye] 1568
I wole þonke him of his grete curtesye
My trouþe wol I kepe I wol nouȝt lye
Wiþ herte sore he goþ vnto his coffre
And broughte gold vnto his philosophre 1572
The value of .v. hundred pound I gesse
And him besecheþ of his gentilnesse
To graunte him dayes of þe remenant
And maister I dar wel make auaunt 1576
I fayled neuer my trouþe as ȝit
ffor sikerly my dettes schal be quyt
Towardes ȝou how euer þat I fare
To gon abegged in my kirtel bare 1580
But wolde ȝe fouche sauf vpon suerte
Two ȝere or þre to respiten me
þenne were I wel for elles moste I selle /[1] [1 *a leaf out of the Corpus MS.*]
[myn heritage / ther is no more to telle [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 261, *back*]
this Philosophre soburly answerde
and seide thus / whan he these wordes herde
haue I nat holden couenaunt / vn-to the
yis certes / wel & trewely / quod he 1588
hast thow nat had thi lady / as the liketh
no no quod he / & sorowfully he siketh
what was the cause / telle me if thou can
Aurelius his tale / anoon bigan 1592
and tolde him al / as ye han herde bifore
hit nedith nat / to rehersen it no more
he seide Arueragus / of gentilnesse
had leuer dien / in sorow & distresse 1596

than his wiff / were of hir trouthe fals [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
the sorow of Dorigen / he told him als
how lothh̄ hir was / to ben a wikked wiff
and that she leu*e*re had that day lost hir liff 1600
and that hir trouthe she swore / thorugh innocence
she neu*e*re erst herde speke / of apparence
that made me han of hir / so grete pite
and right as frely / as he sente hir to me 1604
as frely sente I hir / to him ageyne
this is al & som / ther is no more to seyne
this Philosophre answerde / leue brother [*leaf* 262]
eu*e*ryche of yow dide gentilly / to other 1608
thow art a squyer / & he is a knyghh̄t
but god forbede / for his blisful myghh̄t
but if a Clerke / couthe do a gentil dede
as wel as any of yow / it is no drede 1612
sir I relece the / thi thousand pounde
as thow right now / were crope out of the grounde
ne neu*e*re er now / ne haddist thow knowe me
for sir I wol nat taken / a peny of the 1616
for al my crafft / ne nought for my travaile
thow hast I-paide wel / for my vitaile
hit is I-now / & farewel haue good day
and toke his hors / & forthh̄ he gothh̄ his way 1620
lordinges this question / than wold I axe now
whiche was the most fre / as thenkethh̄ yow
now telleth̄ me / er that I ferther wende
I can no more / my tale is at an ende. 1624
Here endith̄ the ffrankeleyne his tale] [Arch. Seld. *extr. ends*]

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GROUP G. FRAGMENT VIII.

§ 1. THE SECOND NUN'S TALE.

CORPUS MS.

REESE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

[*THE PROEM.*] [*No breaks in the Corpus MS between the stanzas.*]

[And next [Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 215]
bigynneth the seconde nonne hir tale. &c.

(1)

The ministre *and* norice / vn-to vices 1
which that men clepen / in englisſh / Idelnesse
that porter of the gate is / of delices
to eschewen / *and* bi hir contrarie to oppresse 4
that is to seyne / bi leoful besynesse
wel oughte we to don / al oure entente
lest that the fende / thorugh Idelnesse vs hente. 7

(2)

ffor he that with his thousand cordes slighe 8
contenuelly vs waiteth / to bi-clappe
whan he may man/ in Idelnesse aspie
he can so lightly cacche him / in his trappe 11
til that a man be hente / right bi the lappe
he nys not ware / the fende hath him in honde
wel oughte vs werche / *and* Idelnesse with-stonde. 14

(3)

And though men dradden neu*e*re / for to die 15
yit se men wel bi reson / doutelese
that Idelnesse is hoten / slogardie
of whiche cometh neu*e*re / noon encrese 18
and sithen that slouth hir holdith in a lese
only for to slepe / *and* ete *and* drynke
and to devouron / al that other swynke [*leaf* 215, *back*] 21

CORPUS 377 (6-T. 527) [this page, Arch. Seld. B. 14]

(4)

¶ And for to putten vs / from suche Idelnesse [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
that cause is / of so grete confusion
I haue here don / my feithful besynesse
after the legende / in translacion 25
right aft*er* thi glorious liff / *and* passion
thow with thi garland / wroughte of rose *and* lylye
the mene I / maide / *and* martir / seynt Cecelye. 28

(5)

¶ And thow that floure art / of virgynes alle 29
of whom that Bernard / list so wel to write
to the at my bigynnyng / first I calle
thow comforte of vs wrecches / do me endite 32
thi maidens deth / that was thorugh hir merite
the et*er*nal liff / *and* of the fende victorie
as men mow after rede / in hir storie. 35

(6)

¶ Thow maiden *and* moder/doughter of thi sone] [Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extr. ends*]
Thou welle of mercy synful soules cure [leaf 171]
In whom þat god for bounte chees to wone
Thou humble and heih ouer eu*er*y creature 39
Thou nobledest so ferre oure nature
That no desdeyn þe make*re* hadde of kynde
his sone in blood and fleissch to cloþe and wynde 42

(7)

¶ Wiþinne þe cloystre blisful of þine sydes 43
Took mannes schap þe eterne loue and pees
That of þe trine compas lord and gyde is
Whom erþe and see and heuene out of reles 46
Ay herien and þou v*ir*gine wemmeles
Bare of þy body and dwelledest/ mayde pure
The creatour of eu*er*y creature 49

(8)

¶ Assembled is in þi magnificence 50
Wiþ mercy goodnesse and with such pite
þat þou art þe sonne of excellence
Nouȝt only helpest hem þat prayen þe 53
But ofte tyme of þin benignite
fful frely er þat men þin helpe beseche
þou gost byforn and art here lyfes leche 56

(9)

¶ Now help þou meke and blisful faire mayde 57
Me flemyd wrecche in þis desert of galle
Thenk on þe wo*m*man Canane þat sayde
That whelpes eten some of þe cro*m*mes alle 60
þat from here lordes table ben y-falle
And þoughh þat I þe vnworþy sone of eue
be synful ȝit accepte my byleeue 63

(10)

And for þat feiþ is deed wiþoute werkes 64
So for to worchen ȝif me witte and space
þat I be quyt from place þat most derk is
O þou þat art so fair and so ful of grace 67
Be myn aduocate in so heih a place
Ther as wiþouten ende is longe Osanna
Thou cristes moder and doughter of Anna 70

(11)

And of þin lighht my soule kepe in prisoñ 71
That troubled is by þe contagioun
[of my body / & also bi the wighte [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
of erthely lust / & fals affeccion] 74
O heuene o refute O saluacioñ [leaf 171, back]
Of hem þat ben in sorwe and in destresse /
Now help for vnto my werk I wol me dresse / 77

(12)

¶ ȝet pray I ȝou þat reden þat I write 78
ffor ȝeueþ me for I do no diligence
þis ilke story subtil to endite
ffor boþe haue I þe wordes and þe sentence / 81
Of hem þat atte seyntes reuerence /
The story wroot & solewen h*ir* legende
And pray I ȝou þat ȝe woln my werk amende 84

(13) [*THE TALE.*]

fferst wolde I ȝou þe name of seint Cecile 85
Expoune as men may in here stories se
It is to say on englissh̄ heuene lylye
ffor pure chastnesse of virginite / 88
Oþer for sche witnesse hadde of honeste
Of greue of conscience and of good fame
The soote sauour lilye was hire name 91

(14)

Ouþer Cecile is to say þe way to blynde 92
ffor sche ensample was by good techynge
Or elles. Cecile is as I writen fynde
Is ioyned by a maner conioygnynge 95
Of heuen and lya and heiher in figuringe
The heuen is set for þought of holynesse
And lya for hire lastyng busynesse / 98

(15)

Cecile may eek be sayd in þis manere 99
Wantynge of blyndnesse for hire grete light
Of sapiens and for hir þewes clere
Oþer elles þis maydenes name bright/ 102
Of heuen and leos comeþ for which by right
men mighte þe heuene of poeple hire calle
Ensample of goode and wise werkes alle 105

(16)

ffor leos poeple in englissch is to say 106
And right' as men may in þis heuene se
þe sonne and moone and þe sterres euery way
Right' so gostly in þis mayden fre 109
Seyen þe feiþ of' magnificence
And ekyng' of' helþe and of' sapience [leaf 172]
And sondry werkes bright' of' excellence / 112

(17)

And right' as þis philosophres wryte 113
That' heuen is swyft' round and brynnyng'
Right' so was faire Cecile þe whyte
fful swift' and besy euer in good werkyng' 116
And round & hool in good perseueryng
And brenne euere in charite lighte /
Now haue I declared ȝou what' sche highte 119

(18)

This mayden brigh̄t' Cecile as hire lyf' saiþ 120
Was comen of' Romayns and of' noble kynde
And so forþ fostred vp in þe faiþ
Of' crist' and bar his gospel in hire mynde 123
Sche neuer cessede as I writen fynde
Of' hire prayere and god to loue and drede
Besechinge him to kepe hire maydenhede / 126

(19)

And what' þis mayden schulde vnto a man 127
y-wedded be þat' was ful ȝong' of' age
Which þat y-cleped was valerian
And þe day was comen of' hire mariage 130
Sche fil deuoute and humble /in hire corage
Vnder hire robe of' gold þat' sat' ful faire
And next' hire fleissh̄ sche clad hire in an haire 133

(20)

And whiles þe Orgles maden melodye 134
To god allone þus in herte sang' sche
O lord my soule and eek' my body gye
Vnwemmed lest' þat' I confoundid be 137
And for his loue þat' deyde vpon a tre
Euery secounde or þridde day sche faste
Ay byddyng' in hire orisons ful faste 140

(21)

The night' com and to bedde sche moste gon 141
Wiþ hire housbonde as often is þe manere
And pryuely sche sayde to him anon
O swete and wel biloued spouse dere 144
Ther is a counseil and ȝe wolde it here /
Which þat' right' fayn I wol vnto ȝou sayn
So þat' ȝe me assure it' nought' to bewrayn [lf 172, bk] 147

(22)

Valerian gan faste / vnto hire swere 148
That' for no cas ne þing' þat' mighte be
he scholde for no þing' neuer bywreyen hire
And þanne at' erst' þus to him sayde sche 151
I haue an aungel which þat' loueþ me
That' wiþ gret' loue whe*þer* so I wake or slepe
Is redy ay my body for to kepe 154

(23)

And if' þat' he may felen out of' drede 155
[that ye me touche / or loue in vilonye [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
he right anoon wol sle yow / with the dede
and in youre youthe / thus shul ye die 158
and if that ye / in clene loue me guye]
he wolde ȝou loue as me for ȝour clennesse
And schewe ȝou of' his ioye and his brightnesse 161

(24)

valerian corrected as god wolde 162
Answerde azein if' I schal truste to þe /
let' me þat' aungel see and him biholde
And if' þat it a verray aungel be 165
Thanne wol I don as þou hast' preyed me
And if' þou loue anoþ*er* man for soþe /
Right' wiþ þis swerd I wol sle zou boþe 168

(25)

Cecily answerde anon in þis wise 169
If' þat' zou luste þat' aungel schul ze se
So þat' ze trowe on crist' and zou baptise
Goþ forþ to via apia q*uod* sche 172
þat' from þis toun ne stant' by myles þre /
And to þe pouere folkes þat' þere dwelle /
Sey hem right' þus as þat/ I schal zou telle / 175

(26)

Telle hem þat I Cecile zou to hem sent 176
To schewen zou þe goode vrban þe olde
ffor secre needes and fro good entent'
And whan þat' ze seint vrban han byholde / 179
Telle him þe wordes whiche þat' I zou tolde /
And whan þat' he haþ purged zou from synne
þanne schal ze see þat' aungel er ze twynne 182

(27)

Valerian is to þat' place y-gon 183
And right' as him was taught' by his lernyng'
he fond þis holy Vrban þer anon
Among' þese seyntes buriels lotying' .i. latitans 186
And he anon wiþoute tarying' [leaf 173]
Dide his message and whan he hadde tolde
Vrban for ioye gan his handes vpholde 189

(28)

The teeres from his eyhen leet' he falle / 190
Almighty god O Ih*e*su crist q*uod* he
Sowere of' chaste counseill*e* and herde of' vs all*e*
þe fruyt' of' þilke seed of' chastite / 193
þat' þou hast' sowe in Cecile tak' to þe
Lo y-like a busy bee wiþoute gyle
The serueþ ay þin oughne þrall*e* Cecile 196

(29)

¶ ffor þilke spouse þat' sche tok' but' now / 197
fful like a fiers leoñ sche sendeþ heere /
As meke as eny lambe was to ȝow /
And wiþ þat' word anon þer gan apeere / 200
An olde man clad wiþ white cloþes cleere
And hadde a book' wiþ l*ett*res of' gold in honde
And gan biforn Valerian to stonde 203

(30)

Valerian as deed fel doun for drede 204
Whan he him saugh and him vp hente þo
And on his book' right' þus he gan to rede /
O lord o feiþ o god wiþoute mo[1] [1] Et lamentat' [is the next line] 207
Of' cristendom and fader of' al also
Abouen all*e* and ouer all*e* euery where
This wordes all*e* with golde writen were / 210

(31)

Whan þis was rad þan sayde þis olde man 211
leeuest' þou þis þing' or no sey ȝe or nay
I leeue all*e* þis þing' þan þis [quod tho Valerian [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
for sother thing than this /] I dar wel say 214
Vnder þe heuene no wiġht/ ne þenke may
þo vanyssched þe olde man he nyste where
And pope vrban him cristned riġht' þere 217

(32)

Valerian goþ hom and seint' Cecile 218
Wiþinne his chambre an aungel stande
þis aungel hadde of' Rose and of' lylie
Corounes tuo þe which he bar in hande 221
And ferst' to Cecile as I vnderstande /
he ȝaf' þat' oon and after gan he take [leaf 173, back]
þat' oþer to Valerian hire make 224

(33)

With body clene and wiþ vnwe*m*myd þouȝt / 225
kepeþ ay wel þis corounes q*uo*d he
ffrom paradys to ȝou haue I hem brouȝt'
Ne neuer more schulle þey roten be 228
¶ Ne leese here swete sauour trusteþ me
Ne neuere wight' schal seen hem wiþ his yhe
But' he be chaste and hate vilonye / 231

(34)

And þou valerian for þou so sone 232
Assentedest' to good counseil also
Sey what' þe luste and þou schalt' haue þy bone /
I haue a broþ*er* quod valerian þo 235
þat' in þis world I loue no man so
I pray ȝou þat' my broþ*er* may han g*rac*e
To knowe þe trouþe as I do in þis [place] 238

(35)

The aungel answerde god likeþ ȝoure requeste 239
And boþe with þe palme of' martirdome
ȝe schulle come vnto þe blisful feste
And wiþ þat' word Tiburce his broþ*er* come 242
And whan þat' he þe sauour vndernome
Which þat' þe roses and þe lylies caste /
Wiþinne his herte he gan to wondre faste / 245

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(36)

And seyde in þis tyme I wondre of^t þe ȝeere 246
Whenne þis swote sauour comeþ so /
And Rosis and lilyes þat^t I smelle heere
ffor þough^h I hadde hem in myn hondes tuo 249
The sauour migh^t in me no deppere go
þe swete smelle þat^t in myn herte I fynde
haþ chaunged me al in anoþ*er* kinde 252

(37)

valerian sayde tuo coronnes han we 253
Snow whit^t and Rose Reed þat^t schyneþ cleere
Which þat^t þin yhe haþ no migh^t to see
And as þou smellest^t hem þorugh my preyere 256
So schalt^t þou seen hem leeue broþer deere
If^t it/ so be þat^t þou wolt^t wiþouten slouþe
Bileeue arigh^t and knowe verray trouþe [leaf 174] 259

(38)

Tiburce answerde saist^t þou þis to me 260
In soþnesse or in drem herkne ȝe þis
In dremes q*uo*d valerian han we be
vnto þis tyme broþer myn y-wys 263
But^t now at^t erste oure trouþe dwellyng^t is
how wost^t þou q*uo*d Tiburce and in what^t wyse /
Quod valerian þat^t I schal þe deuyse / 266

(39)

þe aungel of^t god haþ me þe trouþe y-taugh^t 267
Which thou schalt^t seen if^t þat^t þou wolt^t reneye
þe ydolis and be clene and elles naugh^t
And of^t þe miracles of^t þise coronnes tweye 270
Seint^t ambrose in his p*re*face lust to seye
Solempnely þis noble doctor deere
Comendiþ it/ and saiþ in þis maneere 273

(40)

The palme of martirdom for to receyue 274
Seint Cecile fulfilde of goddes ȝifte
þe worlde and eek hire chambre gan sche weyue
Witnesse Tiburce and Cecyles schrifte/ 277
To which god of his bounte wolde schifte
Corounes two of floures wel smellynge /
And made þe aungel hem þo corounes brynge 280

(41)

¶ þe mayde haþ brought þise men to blisse aboue 281
The world haþ wist what it is worþ certeyn
Deuocioñ of chastite to loue
þo schewed him Cecile open and pleyn 284
That alle ydolis nys but þing in veyn
ffor þey ben dombe and þer-to þey ben deue
And charged him his ydolis for to leue 287

(42)

¶ Who þat þis troweþ not a beste he is / 288
Quod þo Tiburce if þat I schal not lye
Sche gan þanne kisse his breste and þat herde þis
And was ful glad he couþe trouþe aspye 291
This day take þe for myn allye
Seyde þis blisful mayde fair and deere
ffor after þat sche sayde as ȝe may heere 294

(43)

Lo right so þe loue of crist q*uod* sche [leaf 174, back] 295
made me þin broþ*er*es wyf right in þat wyse
Anoon for myn allye here take I þe
Siþenes þat þou wolt[1] þine ydolis despise [1 *ink spilt over the page*]
Go with þy broþ*er* now and þe baptise /
And make þe clene so þat þou mayst beholde
þe aungels face of which þy broþer tolde 301

(44)

Tiburce answerde and seyde broþ*er* deere 302
fferst telle me whider I schal and to what man
To whom q*uod* he com forþ with rightt good·cheere
I wol þe lede vnto þe pope vrban 305
To Vrban broþer myn Valerian
Quoþ þo Tiburce wilt þou me þider lede
Me þinkeþ þat it were a wonder dede 308

(45)

¶ Remenest þou nouȝt vrban q*uod* he þo 309
That is so ofte dampned to be deed
And woneþ in halkes to & fro /
And dar nouȝt ones putte forþ his heed 312
Men schulle him brenne in a fir so reed
If þat he were founde if þat men mightt him spye
And we also þat bere him companye 315

(46)

And whiles we seken þilke diuinyte 316
þat is y-hyd in heuene priuely
Algate y-brent in þis world schul we be
To whom Cecile answerde bodyly 319
Men mighte drede wel and skilfully
þis lyf to lese my*n* owne deere broþer
yif þis were lyuynge oonly and non oþer 322

(47)

But þer is bettere lyf in oþer place 323
þat neuer schal be lost ne drede þe noughtt
Which goddes sone vs tolde þorugh his grace
[that the fadris sone / hath al thing wrought [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
and al that wrought is / with a skilful thought
the goost that from the fader / gan p*ro*cede
hath souled hem / withouten eny drede. 329

(48)

¶ By worde & bi myracle / godis sone [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
whan he was in this world / declared here
that ther was other liff / there men may wone
to whom answerde Tyburce / O sust*er* dere 333
ne seidist thow right now / in this manere
ther nas but O god / lord in sothfastnesse
and now of thre / how maist thow bere witnesse. 336

(49)

¶ That shal I telle q*uo*d she or that I go] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract ends*]
Right' as a man haþ sapiences þre /
Memorie Ingenie and Intellecte also
So in o beynge of' diuynite / 340
Thre p*er*sones right' wel þer may be
Tho gan sche him besyliche p*re*che /
Of' cristes come. and of' his peynes teche [leaf 175] 343

(50)

And many poyntes of' his passion 344
how goddes sone in þis world was wiþholde
To do mankynde pleyn remission
That' was y-bounde in synne and cares colde 347
Al þis þing' sche vnto Tiburce tolde
And after þis Tiburce in good entent
To pope vrban wiþ Valerian he went 350

(51)

which þanked god and wiþ glad herte & light' 351
he cristned him and made him in þat place
Parfyt' in his lyuynge goddes knight'
And after þis Tiburce gat such grace 354
þat' e*ue*ry day he seyh in tyme and space
þe aungel of' god and euery maner bone
þat' he god asked it' was sped ful sone 357

(52)

¶ It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn 358
how many wondres ih*es*u for him wrouȝt
But atte laste to telle schort and pleyn
þe sergeaunt of þe toun of Rome hem sought 361
And hem byforn Almache þe prouost brought
Which hem opposede and knew al here entent
And to þe ymage of Iubiter he hem sent / 364

(53)

And sayde who so wol not Sacrifise 365
Swap of his heed þis is my sentence heere /
Anon þise martires þat I ȝou deuyse /
On Maximius þat was an officere / 368
Of þe Prefectis and of Corniculere
hem hente and when he forþ þe seintes ledde
himself he weep for pite þat he hadde 371

(54)

¶ Whan maximine hadde herde þe seintes lore / 372
he gat hem of þe tormentoures leue /
And hadde hem in his hous wiþoute more
And wiþ here prechyng er þat it/ were eue 375
þey gonne from þe tormento*ur*s to reue /
And from Maximi*us* and from his folk ilkon
þe false feiþ to trowe in god allon 378

(55)

Cecile cam whan it was woxen night [leaf 175, back] 379
Wiþ prestes þat hem cristned all*e* in feere
And aftirward. whan day was waxen light
Cecile hem sayde wiþ a sobre chere 382
Now cristes owne knightes leeue and deere
Casteþ all*e* a wey þe werkes of derknesse /
And armeþ ȝou in armure of lightnesse 385

(56)

ȝe han forsoþe ydon grete bataiłe 386
ȝoure is doon ȝoure feiþ han ȝe conserued
Goþ to þe coroune of lyf þat may nouȝt faille
þe rightful Iuge which þat ȝe han [served [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14] 389
shal yeue hit yow / as ye han it] deserued
And whan þis þing was sayd as I deuyse
men ladde hem forth to don þe sacrifise / 392

(57)

But whan þey were vnto þe place y-brouȝt / 393
To telle schortly þe conclusioñ
þey nolde encense no sacrifice right nouȝt
But on here knees þey setten hem adoun 396
Wiþ humble herte and sad deuocioñ
And losten boþe here hedes in þe place
here soules wenten to þe kyng of grace 399

(58)

This maximius þat say þis þing betyde / 400
Wiþ pitous tales tolde it/ anon right
þat he here soules saugh to heuen glyde
With aungels ful of clernes and of light 403
And wiþ his word conuerted many a wight
ffor which Almachus dede him so to bete
Wiþ whippe of leed til he his lyf gan lete / 406

(59)

Cecile him took and buried him anon 407
By Tyburce and Valerian softely
Wiþinne hire heryinge place vnder þe ston
And after þis Almachius hastily 410
Bad his mynistres fecchen openly
Cecile so sche mighte in his p*re*sence
Do sacrifice and Iubit*er* encense 413

(60)

But þey conuertid þorugh̃ hire wise lore 414
Wepten sore and ȝauen credence /
Vnto hire word and cryden more and more [leaf 176]
Cristꝰ goddes sone wiþouten difference 417
his verray god þis is alle oure sentence
þatꝰ haþ so good a seruañtꝰ him to serue
þus wiþ oo vois we trowe þeyȝ we sterue 420

(61)

Almachius þat herde al þis speckingꝰ 421
Bad fecche Cecile þatꝰ he mightꝰ hir se
And alþer firstꝰ lo þis was his askyngꝰ
Whatꝰ maner womman artow þo quod he / 424
I am a gentil womman born quod sche /
I aske quod he þouȝ it þe greue
Ofꝰ þin religiõ̃ and ofꝰ þin byleeue 427

(62)

Whi þanne bygan ȝoure questiõ̃ folily 428
Quod sche þatꝰ woldestꝰ tuo answers conclude /
In oo demaunde ȝe askide lewedly
Almachie answerde to þatꝰ similitude / 431
[of whens cometh̃ thin answere / so rude] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
Ofꝰ whennes quod sche. whan þatꝰ sche was refreyned
Ofꝰ conscience and ofꝰ good feiþ vnfeyned 434

(63)

Almachius sayde takestꝰ þou non heede / 435
Ofꝰ þin answere and sche him answerde þus
ȝoure mightꝰ quod sche litel is to drede /
ffor euery mortel mannes power nys 438
Butꝰ y-like a bladdre ful ofꝰ wynd y-wys /
ffor wiþ a neldis poynt/ when þatꝰ is blowe
may al þe bostꝰ ofꝰ itꝰ be leyd ful lowe / 441

(64)

fful wrongfully bigan þou q*uod* he 442
And ȝit' in wrong' is þin p*er*seuerance
Wost' þou nouȝt' how oure mighty p*r*inces fre
Ben þus coma*u*ndid and maken ordinannce 445
That eu*er*y cristne wigh̄t' schal han pena*n*nce
But' if' þat' he his cristendom wiþ-seye
And gon al quyt' if' he wol it' receyue 448

(65)

¶ ȝoure princes erren as ȝoure noblen doth̄ 449
Quod þo Cecile / and a wood sentence
ȝe make vs gulty and it nys nouȝt soþ
ffor ȝe þat' knowen wel oure Innocence 452
ffor as moche as we don a reu*er*ence [leaf 176, back]
To crist'. and for we bere a cristene name
ȝe putte on vs a cryme and eek' a blame 455

(66)

But' we þat' knowen þilke name so 456
ffor v*er*tuous we may it' not' say
Almachie answerde chese on of' þise tuo
Do sacrifice or cristendom reneyne 459
þat' þou mow now skapen by þat' wey
At' which þe holy blisful mayde
gan for to laughe and to þe Iuge sche sayde 462

(67)

O Iuge confuse in þy nycete 463
Wolt' þou þat' I reneye Innocence /
To make me a wicked wight' quod sche
loo he dissimileþ here in audience / 466
he stareþ and woodeþ in his aduertence
To whom almachius O Vnseely wrecche /
Ne wost' þou nough̄t' how fer my migh̄t' may strecche 469

(68)

haþ nought oure mighty prince to me y-ȝouen 470
ȝe boþe power and auctorite /
To make folk to deyen and to lyuen
Why spekest þou so proudly þenne to me 473
I ne speke it nouȝt but stedefastly q*uod* sche /
Nought proudly for I say as for my syde
I hate dedly þilke vice of pryde 476

(69)

¶ And if þou drede nouȝt a soþ to heere 477
þan wol I schewen al openly by right
That þou hast/ maad a ful gret lesyng heere
þou sayst þy princes han ȝeue þe might 480
Boþe to sleen and eek for to quike a wight
þou þat ne mayst but oonly lyf here byreue
þan nast þ*er*to neyþer power ne leeue 483

(70)

But þou mayst see þin princes han þe maked 484
Ministre of deþ for if þou speke of mo /
þou lyest for þy power is ful naked
Do wey þy boldenesse/ seyde almachius þo 487
And sacrifice to oure goddes or two [leaf 177]
I ne recche nouȝt what wrang þat þou me profre
ffor I can suffre it as a philosophre 490

(71)

But þilke wronges may I nought endure 491
þat þou spekest of oure goddes here q*uo*d he /
Cecile answerde O nyce creature
þou saydest no word syns þou speeke to me 494
þat I ne knewe þ*er*with þy nycete
And þat þou were in eu*er*y maner wyse /
A lewed officer and a vein Iustise 497

(72)

þer lackeþ noþing' to þin vtter yhen 498
þat' þou nart' blynd for þing' þat we seen alle
That' is a ston yt' men wel may aspyen
That ilke ston a god þou wilt' it calle 501
I rede þe let' þin hond vpon it' falle
And taste it' wel and stoon þou schalt' it fynde /
Syns þat' þou sixt' it nought' wiþ þin yȝen blynde / 504

(73)

It is a schame þat' þe poeple schall' 505
So skorne þe and lawhe at' þy folye /
ffor comunely wo*m*men woot' it wel ouer al
þat' mighty god is in his heuene^s hihe 508
And þese ymages wel þanne mayst' þou aspye
To þe ne to hemself' may þey not' p*ro*fyte
ffor in here effecte þey be not' worþ a myte 511

(74)

þis and such o*per* wordes seyde sche / 512
and he wax wroþ and bad þey schulde hire lede /
home to hire hous and in hire hous q*uod* he
Brenne hire in a fire wiþ fla*m*mes reede 515
And as he bad right' so was don in dede
And in a bathe þey gan hire faste scheten
And night' and day gret' fuyr vnder þey beetyn 518

(75)

Al þe longe night' and eek' þe day also / 519
ffor alle þe fuyr and eek' þe baþes hete /
Sche satte al colde and felt' of' it/ no wo
Ne made hire a drop nouȝt' for to swete / 522
But' in þat' baþe hire lyf' sche moste lete /
ffor he Almachie wiþ ful wikked entent' [leaf 177, back]
To slen hure in þe bath his sonde sent 525

(76)

þre strokes in þe necke he smot hire þo 526
The tormento*ur* but for no maner chaunce
he might not smyten al hire necke a tuo
And for þer was þat tyme an ordynaunce 529
That no man scholde do man such penañce
þe ferþe strook to smyten softe or sore
þis tormento*ur* ne durste nomore 532

(77)

But half ded wiþ hire necke koruen þere / 533
he laft hir lye and in his wey he went
þe cristne folke whiche abouten hire were /
Wiþ scheetes home ful faire hire hent 536
þre dayes lyued sche in þis torment
And neuer cessed hem þe feiþ to teche
þat sche hadde fostred hem sche gan to p*r*eche 539

(78)

And hem sche ȝaff hire moebles and hire þing 540
And to þe pope vrban bitok hem þo /
And sayde þus I askede þis of heuen king
To haue respyt þre dayes and no mo / 543
To recomande to ȝou er þat I go
þise soules lo and þat I mighte do wirche
here of myn hous p*er*petuelliche a chirche 546

(79)

Seint vrban wiþ his deaknes priuely 547
The body fette and buried it by nighte
Among his oþere seintes honestely
hire hous þe chirche of seint Cecile highte 550
Seynt vrban halwed it as he wel mighte
In þe which in to þis day in noble wyse /
Men don to cryst and to his seintz s*er*uise 553

¶ Here endeþ Seint Ceciles Tale /

[on leaf 177, back] ¶ Hic incipit fabula Canonici

Whan ended was þe lyf of seint Cecile
Er we fully hadde ryden fyue myle
At Boghtoñ vnder þe blee. vs gan atake /
A man þat cloþed was in cloþes blake 557
And vnder þat he hadde a whit surplys
his hakeney þat was al pomel grys [leaf 178]
So swette þat it wonder was to see
It semed he hadde priked myles þre 561
þe hors eek þat his ȝoman rood vpon
So swette þat vnneþe mighte he gon
Aboute þe peytrel stood þe foom ful hiȝe
he was of fome al flekked as a pye 565
A male twyfold on his croper lay
It semed þat he caryed lytel aray
Al light for somer rood þis worþy man
And in myn herte wondren I bygan 569
What þat he was til þat I vnderstood
how þat his cloke was sewed to his hood
ffor which whan I longe hadde avised me /
I demed him som chanoñ for to be / 573
his hat hyng at his bak doun by a las /
ffor he hadde ryde more þan trot or pas /
he hadde ay priked lyk as he were wood
A clote leef he hadde vnder his hood 577
ffor swot and for to kepe his heed from hete
But it/ was ioye for to seen him swete /
his forhed dropped as a stillatorie
Were ful of plaunteyne and of peritorie 581

And whan þat he cam he bigan to crye 582
God saue q*uod* he þis Ioly companye
ffaste haue I priked q*uod* he for ȝoure sake
By cause þat I wolde ȝou ou*er*take / 585
To ryden in þis merye companye
His ȝoman eek was ful of curtesye
And sires now in þe morwe tyde /
Out of ȝoure ostellerye I sayȝ ȝou ryde 589
And warned heer my lord and my souerayn
Which þat to ryde wiþ ȝou is ful fayn
ffor his disport he loueþ daliaunce
ffrend for þy warnyng god ȝiue þe good chaunce 593
Sayde oure oost certes it wolde seeme /
Thy lord were wys and so I may wel deme / [leaf 178, back]
he is ful iocunde also dar I lay
Kan he ought telle a merye tale or tway 597
Wiþ which he glade may þis companye
Who sire. my lord! ȝe ȝe wiþoute lye
he can of merþe and eek of Iolite
Nought but ynough also sire trusteþ to me 601
And ȝe him knewe als wel as do I
ȝe wolde wondre how wel and priftyly
he couþe werke and þat in sondry wyse
he haþ take on him many sondry aprise 605
Which were ful hard for eny þat is heere /
To bringe aboute but þey of him it lere /
As homely as he ryt amonges ȝou
If ȝe him knewe it wolde be ȝoure prow / 609
ȝe nolde not forgon his aqueintance
ffor mochil good I dar leye in balance
Al þat I haue my possession
he is a man of heigh discrecion 613
I warne ȝou wel he is a passynge man
Wel quoþ oure host I pray þe telle me þan
Is he a Clerk or noon telle what he is
Nay he is gretter þan a clerk y-wys 617

Seyde ȝe ȝoman and in wordes fewe 618
Ostꝑ and of his craftꝑ somwhatꝑ I wol ȝou schewe
I say my lord can such a sotilte
Butꝑ alle his crafte ȝe may notꝑ wite atꝑ me 621
And somwhatꝑ helpe I ȝitꝑ to his worchinge
Thatꝑ al þis ground which þatꝑ we ben on rydynge
Til þatꝑ we come to Caunturbury toun
he couþe al clene turne it/ vp se doun 625
And paue itꝑ al ofꝑ siluer and ofꝑ gold
And whan þis ȝoman hadde þus y-told
vnto oure hoostꝑ // he seyde benedicite
þis þingꝑ is wonder merueylous to me 629
Siþens þatꝑ þi lord is ofꝑ so heigh prudence /
By cause ofꝑ which men scholde him reuerence / [leaf 179]
Thatꝑ ofꝑ his worschipe rekkeþ he so lyte
his ouer sloppe / nys nouȝtꝑ worþ a myte / 633
As in effecte to him so mote I go
Itꝑ is al baudy and to-tore also
Whi is þi lord so sluttissche I þe prey
And is ofꝑ power better cloþes to bey 637
Ifꝑ þatꝑ his dede acorde wiþ þy speche
Telle me þat and þatꝑ I þe byseche /
Why q*uod* þis ȝeman wherto aske ȝe me /
God help me so for he schal neuer y-the 641
Butꝑ I wol notꝑ avowe þatꝑ I say
And þ*er*fore kepe it secre I ȝou p*ray*
he is to wys in faiþ as I bileeue
And þatꝑ is ouer doon itꝑ nyl notꝑ preue 645
And rightꝑ as clerkes sein itꝑ is a vice /
Wherfore in þatꝑ I holde him lewed and nyce
ffor whan a ma[n] haþ ouer gretꝑ a witt
fful often it happeþ to mysvsen itꝑ 649
So doþ my lord and þat me greueþ sore
God itꝑ amende I can seye now no more
Ther-ofꝑ no fors goode ȝoman q*uod* our*e* hoostꝑ
Siþens ofꝑ þe connyngꝑ of þy lord þou woost 653

Telle how he doþ I pray þe hertely 654
Siþens þat he is so crafty and so sly
Wher dwellen ȝe if to telle be
In Subarbes of a toun q*uo*d he 657
lurkyng in hernes and in lanes blynde
Where þise Robbers and þeeues be kynde
holden here preuy ferful resydence
As þay þat dur nat schewe here p*re*sence 661
So fare we if I schal saye þe soþe
ȝit q*uod* oure hoste lat me talke toþe
Why art þou discoloured on þy face
Peter q*uod* he god ȝiue hit harde grace 665
I am so vsed in þe fyre to blowe
That it haþ chaunged my colour as I trowe [leaf 179, back]
I nam nat wont in myrour to prye
But swynke sore and lerne to multiplye 669
We bloundren euer and pouren in þe fyr
And for al þat we faillen of oure desir
ffor euer we lacken oure conclusioñ
To moche folk we ben but Illusioñ 673
And borwe gold be it a pound or tuo
Or ten or twelue or manye so*m*mes mo
And make hem wenen atte leste weye
þat of a pound we couþe make tweye 677
ȝit is it fals and ay we han good hope
It for to don and after it we grope
But þat science is so fer vs biforn
We mowe not al þoughh̄ we hadde it sworn 681
It ouertake it[1] slyt awey so faste [1 *a second* it *scratcht out*]
It wole us make beggeres atte laste
Whil þis ȝoman was þus in þis talking
þis chanoñ drough̄ him ner and herde alle þing 685
Which þat þis ȝoman spak for suspecioñ
Of mennes speche euere hadde þis Chanoñ
ffor Catoñ seith̄ he þat gulty is
Demeþ alle þing be spoke of him ywys 689

By cause of' þat' he gan so neigh to drawe / 690
his ȝoman. þat' he herde alle his sawe /
And þus he sayde vnto his ȝoman þo
holde now þy pees and speke wordes no mo / 693
ffor if' þou dost' þou schalt' it dere abye
Thou sclaundrest' me here in þis compaignye
And eek' discouerest' þat' þou scholdest' hyde
ȝee q*uod* oure hoost' telle on what' so' betyde 697
Of' alle þis þretyng' recche I nat' a myte
I faiþ quod he no more do I but' a lite
And whan þis Chanoñ say it' wolde nat' be
But' his ȝoman wolde telle his priuyte 701
he fledde away for verray sorwe and schame /
A q*uod* þe ȝoman here schal aryse a game [leaf 180]
Al þat' I can anon right/ wol I telle
Siþens he is gon þe foule feend him quelle / 705
ffor neuer her after wol I wiþ him mete
ffor peny ne for pound I ȝou biheete /
he þat' me broughte ferst' vnto þat game /
Er þat' he deye sorwe haue he and schame 709
ffor it' is ernest' to me by my fayþ
That' feele I wel what so eny man saiþ /
And ȝit' for al my smert' and al my greef'
ffor al my sorwe labour and mescheef' 713
I couþe neuer leue it in no wyse
Now wolde god my witt/ mighte suffise
To tellen al þat' longeþ to þat art'
But' naþeles ȝit' wol I telle a part' 717
Syþens þat' my lord is gon I wol not' spare
Such þing' as I knowe I wol declare /

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*THE PREAMBLE.*]

With þis chanoñ dwelled haue I seuen ȝeer
And of' his science am I neuer þe neer 721
Al þat' I hadde I haue y-lost' þerby
And god wot' so haue many mo þan I
þer I was wont' to be rigħt' freissch and gay
Of' cloþing' and of' good array 725
Now may I were an hose vpon myn heed
And wher my colour was boþe freissh and reed
Now is it' wan and of' a ledene hewe
Who so it vseth sore schal he rewe 729
And of my swynk' ȝit' blered is myn yȝe
lo which auauntage it is to multiplye
That' slydynge science haþ me maad so bare
That' I haue no good where þat' euer I fare 733
And ȝit' I am endetted so þer by
Of' gold þat/ I haue borwed trewely
þat' whil I lyue I schal it' quite neuere /
lat' euery man be war by me for euere 737
What maner man þat casteþ him þ*er*to
If' he continue I holde his þrifte y-do [leaf 180, back]
So help me god þer-by schal he not' wynne
But' empte his purs and make his wittes þinne 741
And whan he þorugħ his madnesse and folye
haþ lost' his owne good þorugħ Iepardye
þanne he exciteþ oþer men þ*er*to
To lese here good as himself' haþ do 745
ffor vnto schrewes Ioye it is and ese
To haue here felawes in peyne and disese

Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk
Of þat no charge I wol speke of oure werk 749
Whan we ben þere as we schulle exercise
Oure eluysshe craft: we semen wonder wise
Oure termes ben so clergeal and so queynte
I blowe þe fuyr. til þat myn herte feynte 753
What scholde I telle eche proporcioñ
Of þinges whiche þat we worchen vppon
As on fyue or sixe vnces may wel be
Of siluer or of som oþer quantite 757
And besye me to telle ȝou þe names
Of Opyment brent bones yren squames
That in to poudre grounden ben ful smal
And in an erþen pot how þat put is al 761
And salt y-put in and also paupere
Bifore þise poudres þat I speke of here
And wel y-couered wiþ a laumpe of glas
And of muche oþer þing what þat þer was 765
And of þe pot and glas englutyng
That of þe aier mighte passe no þing
And of þe esy fyr and smert also
Which þat was mad and of þe care and wo 769
þat we hadde in oure matiers sublymynge
And amalgamynge and Calcenynge
Of quyk syluer y-cleped mercurie crude
ffor alle oure sleighte̅s we can nouȝt conclude 773
Oure orpymed and sublimed mercurie
Oure grounde litarge eek on þe porphirie [leaf 181]
Of ech of þise of vnces a certayn
Nouȝt helpeþ vs oure labour is in vain 777
Ne eek oure spirites ascencioun
Ne eek oure matieres þat lyn al fixe a doun
Mowen in oure werkynge no þing vs auayle
ffor lost is alle oure labour and trauaile 781
And al þe cost on twenty deuele wey
Is lost also which we vpon it ley

þer is also many anoþ*er* þing/
þat is to oure crafte aperteynyng 785
þoughh I by ordre hem here ne reherse can
By cause þat I am a lewed man
ȝit wol I telle hem as þey come to mynde
Thoughh I ne kan nat sette hem in here kynde 189
As boole armonyak *ver*degres Boras
And sondry vesseles made of erþe and glas
Oure vrinales and oure descensories
Violes creseletes and sublimatories 793
Concurbites and Alembykes eeke
And oþer swiche deere ynoughh a leeke
Nat needeþ it/ to rehersen hem alle
Wateres Rubysynge and boles galle 797
Arsynek Sal armonyak and Brymston
And herbes couþe I telle eek many oon
As Egrymoyne Valerian and lunarie
And oþer suche if þat me luste tarie 801
Oure laumpes brennyng boþe night and day
To bringe aboute oure craft if þat we may
Oure fornays eke of Calcynacioñ
And of watres albyficacioñ 805
vnslekked lym chalk and glaire of an ey
Poudres dyuers aisshes dong pisse and cley
Seryd pokettes Sal petre and vitriole
And diuerse fyres made of woode and cole 809
Salt tartre Alcaly and Salt p*re*parat
And combust matieres and coagulat [leaf 181, back]
Cley maad wiþ horses or mannes heer and oyle
Of tartre alym glas berme wort and argoyle 813
Rysalgar and oþer matieres enbykynge
And eek of oure matieres encorporynge
And eek of Siluer Citrynacioñ
Oure sementynge and fermentacioñ 817
Oure Ingotes testes and many mo
I wol ȝou telle as was me taughht also /

þe foure spirites and þe bodyes seuene /
By ordre ofte as I herde my lord neuene 821
The fyfte spirit quyk' siluer called is
þe seconde orpiment. þe þridde y-wys
Sal armoniak' and þe ferþe bremston
The bodyes seuene eek' lo hem heere anon 825
Sol gold is and luna siluer we threpe /
Mars yren mercurie quyk syluer we clepe
Saturn*us* leed and Iubiter is tyn
And venus Copur by my fader kyn 829
This cursede craft' who so wol ex*er*cise
he schal no good han þat' may him suffise
ffor all*e* þe good he spendeþ þer aboute
he lese schal þer-of' haue I no doute 833
Who so þat' list' to outen his folye
let' him come forþ and lerne to multiplie
And eu*er*y man þat' haþ aught' in his cofre
lat' him appere and wexe a philosophre 837
As-scaunce þat' craft' is so light' for to lere
Nay nay god woot' al be he monk' or frere /
Preste or Chanoñ or eny oþer wight
þough he sitte at' his book' boþe day and night 841
In lernyng' of' þis cluyssh̄ nyce lore /
Al is in veyn and par de moche more
Is to lerne a lewed man þis sotilte
ffy speke nouȝt' þ*er*of' for it/ wol not' be 845
Al cowde he letterure or couþe he non
As in effecte he schal fynde it al on [leaf 182]
ffor boþe tuo by my saluacioñ
Concluden in multiplicacioñ 849
I-liche wel whan þey han all*e* y-do
This is to seyn þey faille boþe tuo
ȝit' forȝat' I to moche rehersaille
Of' watres corosif' and of' lymaille 853
And of' bodyes mollificacioñ
And also of' here induracioñ

Oyles ablucioñ and metall*e* fusible
To tellen all*e* wolde passen ony bible 857
þat owher is wherfore as for þe beste
Of alle þise names now wole I me reste
ffor as I trowe I haue ȝou told ynoughh
To reysen a feende loke he neuer so roughh 861
A nay let be þy philosophres ston
Elixir cleped we sechen faste echoon
ffor hadde we him þan were we syker ynoughh
But vnto god of heuene I make avow 865
ffor all*e* oure craft whan we han al y-do
And al oure sleighte / he wol not come vs to
He haþ vs maad spende moche good
ffor sorwe of which almost we wexen wood 869
But þat good hope crepeþ in oure herte
Supposyng euere þoughh we sore smerte
To be releuyd by him aftirward
Supposyng and hope is scharp and hard 873
I warne ȝou wel it is to seken euere
þat future temps haþ maad men disseuere
In trust *per*-of fram al þat euer þey hadde
ȝit of þat art þey couþe not wexe sadde 877
ffor vnto hem it is a bitterswete
So semeþ it for ne hadde þey but a scheete
Which þat þey mighte wrappe hem In a nighht
And a bak to walken in by day lighht 881
þey wolde hem sellen and spenden on þis craft
They can nouȝt stynte til no þing be laft [leaf 182, back]
And euermore wher þat euer þey gon
men may hem knowe by smel of Bremston 885
ffor al þe world þey stynken as a goot
here sauour is so Rammisshh and so hoot
That þoughh a man from hem a myle be
That sauour wol enfecte him trusteþ me 889
lo þus by smellyng and by þred bare array
If þat men list þis folk þey knowe may

And if a man wol aske him priuely
Why þey ben cloþed so vnþriftily 893
Right anon þey wole rownen in his eere
And seye if þay aspyed were
Men wolde hem sle by cause of here science
lo þus þis folk bytrayen Innocence 897
Passe ouer þis I go my tale vnto
Er þen þe pot be on þe fyr y-do
Of metals wiþ a certein quantite
My lord hem tempreþ and no man but he 901
Now he is gon. I dar say boldely
ffor as men sein he can do craftily
Algate I wot wel he haþ such a name
And ȝit ful ofte he renneþ in þe blame 905
And wite ȝe how ful ofte it happeþ so
The pot tobrekeþ and far wel alle is go
þise metals ben of so gret violence /
Oure walles may not make hem resistence 909
But if þey were wrouȝt of lym and ston
þey percen so and þoruȝ þe wal þey gon
And some of hem synken in to þe ground
þus haue we lost by tymes many a pound 913
And somme are scatered al þe floor aboute
Somme lepen in to þe roof wiþouten doute
þough þat þe fende nought in oure sighte him schewe
I trowe þat he wiþ vs be þat schrewe 917
In helle wher þat he is lord and sire /
Ne is þer no more woo ne angur nor Ire [leaf 183]
Whan þat oure pot is broke as I haue sayd
Euery man chit and halt him yuel payd 921
Som seyde it was long on þe fyr makyng
Somme sayde nay it was on þe blowyng
þan was I fered for þat was myn office
Straw q*uod* þe þridde ȝe ben lewed and nyce 925
It was not tempred as it oughte be /
Nay q*uod* þe ferþe stynt and herkne me

By cause oure fyr was nat made of bech
þat is þe cause non oþ*er* so peech 929
I can not telle wher-on it is a long
But wel I wot gret stryf is vs among
What q*uod* my lord þer is nomore to done /
Of þise p*er*iles I wil be war eft sone / 933
I am right syker þat þe pot was crased
Be as be may be ȝe no þing amased
As vsage is let swope þe floor as swyþe
Pluk vp ȝour herte and be ȝe glad and bliþe 937
The mullok on an heep y-swoped was
And on þe floor cast a kaneuas
And al þis mullok in a Syue y-þrowe
And y-sifted and y-plucked many a þrowe 941
Parde q*uod* oon som what of oure metal
ȝet is þer heere þough we haue not all
And þough þis þing myshapped haþ as now
Anoþer tyme it may be wel ynow 945
vs moste putte oure good in aduenture /
A marchant parde may not ay endure /
Trustneþ me wel in his p*ros*p*er*ite
Som tyme his good is drowned in þe see / 949
And som tyme comeþ it sauf vnto þe londe
Pees q*uod* my lord þe nexte tyme I wol fonde
To bringe oure crafte all*e* in anoþ*er* plyt
And but I do sires lat me haue þe wyte 953
Ther was defaute in somwhat wel I woot
Anoþ*er* seyde þe fyr was ouer hoot [leaf 183, back]
But be it hoot or cold I dar seye þis
þat we concluden eu*er*emore amys / 957
We faille of þat which þat we wolde haue /
And in oure madnesse eu*er*emore we raue
And whan we ben togidere euerich on
Euery man semeþ as wys as Salomon 961
But all*e* þing which þat semeþ as þe goolde /
Is nat golde as I haue herd it tolde /

GROUP **G.** § **3.** CAN.-YEOMAN'S PREAMBLE. **Corpus MS.**

Ne euery appul þat is fair at ye
Ne is not good what so men clappe or crye / 965
Right so lo fareþ it amonges vs
he þat semeþ þe wysest by Ih*es*us
Is most fool whan it comeþ to þe preef
And he þat semeþ trewest is a þeef 969
That schul ȝe knowe er þat I fro ȝou wende /
By þat I of my tale haue maad an ende

[*No break in the MS.*]

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther is a chanoun of Religio*un*
Amonges vs wolde enfecte al a toun 973
þoughh it as gret were as was Nynyue /
Rome Alisandre. Troye and oþre þre
his sleightes and his infinite falsnesse /
þer couþe noman writen as I gesse / 977
þoughh þat he mighte lyuen a þousend ȝeer
In alle þis world of fal[s]nesse nys his peer
ffor in his termes he wole him so wynde
And speke his wordes in so sleighh a kynde 981
Whan he co*m*mune schal wiþ ony wighht
What he wol make him dote anon righht
But it þe feend be as his seluen is /
fful many a man haþ he begyled er þis 985
And wile if þat he may lyue a while /
And ȝit men ryden and gon ful many a myle
him for to seeke and haue his aqueyntance
Nouȝt knowyng of his false gouernance / 989
And if ye lust to ȝiue me audience
I wol it tellen here in ȝoure p*re*sence [leaf 184]
But worschipful Chanoñ religious
Ne demeþ nouȝt þat I sclaundre ȝour hous 993
Al þoughh my tale of a Chanoñ be
Of eu*er*y ordre som schrewe is parde
And god forbede þat alle a compaignie
Scholde rewe a synguler mannes folye 997
To sclaundre ȝou it is not myn entent
But to correcten þat mys I-ment

This tale nas nat oonly told for ȝou
But eek for oþer mo ȝe wot wel how 1001
That amonges cristes apostles twelue
Ther was no trayto*ur* but Iudas himselue
þanne why scholde þe remenañt alle haue blame
That gulteles were by ȝou sey I þe same 1005
Sauf oonly þis if ȝe wiln herkne me
If ony Iudas in ȝoure couent be
Remeueþ him by tyme I ȝou rede
If schame or losse may causen ony drede 1009
And beþ no þing displesed I ȝou pray
But in þis caas herkneth what I say

IN londoñ was a prest an annueler
That þer-Inne dwelled hadde many a ȝeer 1013
Which was so plesañt / and so se*r*uisable /
Vnto þe wyf wher he was at þe table
That sche wolde suffre him no þing for to pay
ffor bord nor cloþing wente he non so gay 1017
And spendyng siluer had he right ynough
þer-of no force I wol procede as now /
And telle forþ my tale of þe Chanoñ
þat brouȝte þis prest to confusioñ 1021
This false Chanoñ cam vpon a day
vnto þe prestes chambre þer he lay
Byseching him to lene him a certeyn
Of golde and he wold quite it him ageyn 1025
leneþ me a mark q*uod* he but dayes þre
And at my day I wol it quite þe [leaf 181, back]
And if so be þat þou fynde me fals
Anoþer day hang me vp by þe hals 1029
This prest him tok a mark and þat as swiþe
And þis Chanoun him þanked often siþe
And took his leue and wente forth his wey
And atte þridde day brouȝt his money 1033
And to þis prest he took þis gold aȝein
Ther-of þis prest was glad and fayn

Certes q*uod* he no þing' anoyeth me
To lene a man a noble or tuo or þre 1037
Or what' þing' were in my possessioñ
Whan he so trewe is of' condicioñ
þat' in no wise he breke wole his day
To swich a man I can neuer say nay 1041
What' q*uod* þis Chanoñ scholde I be vntrewe
Nay þat' were þing' fallen al of' þe newe
Troupe is a þing' þat' I wol euer kepe /
Vnto þe day in which þat' I schal crepe 1045
in to my graue and elles god forbede
Bileeueþ þis as siker as is ȝoure Crede
God þanke I and in good tyme be it sayd
þat' þer was neuer man ȝit' euel payd 1049
ffor gold ne siluer þat' he to me lente
Ne neuere falshede in myn herte I mente
And sire q*uod* he now of' my priuyte
Siþens ȝe so goodlich haue ben to me 1053
And kiþed to me so gret' gentilnesse
Somwhat' to quite with ȝoure kyndenesse
I wol ȝou schewe and if' ȝou lest' to leere /
I schal it' schewe to ȝou anon right' heere 1057
how I kan worchen in philosophie
Takeþ good heed ȝe schuln seen wel at' ye
That' I wol don a maystry ar I go
ȝe quoþ þe prest' / ȝe sire and wil ȝe so 1061
Marie þer of' I p*ray* ȝou hertily
At' ȝoure comaundeme*nt*' sire trewely [leaf 185]
Quoþ þe Chanoñ and elles god forbede
lo how þis þeef' coupe his seruise beede 1065
fful soþ it' is þat' such profred seruise
Stynkeþ as witnessen þise olde wise
And þat' ful sone I wol it' verefye
In þis Chanoñ is roote of' alle treccherie 1069
þat' eueremore delyt' haþ and gladnesse/
Suche feendly þoughtes in his herte impresse /

how cristes poeple he may to meschief bringe
God kepe vs from his fals dissimilynge 1073
What wiste þis prest wiþ whom þat he delte
Ne of his harm comynge no þing he felte
O sely prest o sely Innocent
Wiþ coueytise anon þou schalt be blent 1077
O graceles ful blynd is þy conceyt
No þing artow war of þe deceyt
Which þat þis fox y-schapen haþ to þe
his wyly wrenches þou mayst nouȝt fle 1081
Wher-fore to go to þe conclusioñ
þat referreþ to þi confusioñ
vnhappy man anon I wol me hiȝe
To telle þin vnwitte and þy folye 1085
And eek þe falsnesse of þat o*þer* wrecche
As ferforþ as my connynge wol strecche
This Chanoñ was my lord ȝe wolde weene
Sire oste in faith and by þe heuen quene 1089
It was ano*þer* chanoun and nat he
That can an hundred fold more sotyltee
he haþ bytrayed folkes many tyme
Of his falsnesse it/ dulleþ me to Ryme 1093
Euer whan I speke of his falshede
ffor schame of him my chekes wexen reede
Algates þey bygynne for to glowe
ffor reednesse haue I now right wel I knowe 1097
In my visage for fumes diuerse
Of metals whiche ȝe haue herd me reherce [leaf 185, back]
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse /
Now take heede of þis Chanoñs cursednesse 1101
Sire quod he to þe prest lat ȝoure man gon
ffor quyk siluer þat we it hadde anon
And lat him bringe vnces tuo or þre
And whan he comeþ as faste schul ȝe see 1105
A wonder þing which ȝe say neuer ar þis
Sire q*uod* þe prest it schal ben don y-wys

he bad his seruañt fechen him) his þing
And he al redy was at his biddyng 1109
And wente him forþ and cam anon agayn
Wiþ þis quyk siluer schortly for to sayn
And tok þis vnces þre to þe Chanoñ
And he it leyde faire and wel a doun 1113
And bad þe seruañt coles for to bringe
þat he anon mighte go to his worchinge
The coles rightt anon weren y-fette
And þis chanoñ tok out a crosselette 1117
Of his bosom and schewed it þe prest
This Instrument *quod* he which þat þou seest
Tak in þin hond and put þiself *per* Inne
Of þis quyk siluer an vnce and here bygynne 1121
In þe name of crist to wexe a Philosophre
Ther ben ful fewe which þat I wolde profre
To schewen hem þus mochel of my science
ffor ȝe schuln seen heere by experience 1125
þat þis quyk siluer I wol mortefye
Rightt in ȝoure sightt anon wiþoute lye
And make it as good siluer and as fyn
As þer is ony in ȝoure purs or myn 1129
Or elles where and make it malliable/
And elles holde me fals and vnable
Amonges folk euere to appere
I haue a poudre here þat coste me deere 1133
schal make al good for it is cause of alH
My connynge which þat I ȝou schewe schalH [leaf 186]
Voydeth ȝoure man) and lat him be *per*oute /
And schitte þe dore whiles we ben aboute / 1137
Oure pryuyte þat noman vs espie
Whiles we werken in þis philosophie /
Al as he bad fulfilled was in dede /
This ilke seruañt anon rightt out ȝede 1141
And his maistrer schitte þe dore anon)
And to here labour speedily þey gon

This p*rest*ᵗ atᵗ þis cursed chanōns byddyngᵗ
Vpon þe fire anon sette þis þingᵗ 1145
And blew þe fyr and busyed him ful faste
And þis chanoñ in to þis Crosseletᵗ caste
A poudre notᵗ I wher-ofᵗ þatᵗ itᵗ was
I-maad oþer ofᵗ chalkᵗ oþer ofᵗ glas 1149
Or som whatᵗ elles was notᵗ worþ a flye
To blynde wiþ þis prestᵗ and bad him hye
þise coles for to couchen al aboue
þe cresseletᵗ for in tokne þatᵗ I þe loue 1153
Quoþ þis Chanoñ þine hondes tuo
Schulle worche alle þingᵗ which as schal be do
G*raunt mercy quod* þe prestᵗ and was ful glad
And couchede coles as þe Chanoñ bad 1157
And whils he besy was þis feendly wrecche
þis false Chanoñ þe foule feend him fecche
Outᵗ ofᵗ his bosom tookᵗ a bechene cole /
In which ful sotilly was maad an hole 1161
And þer Inne putᵗ was ofᵗ siluer lymaille
An vnce and stopped was wiþoute faille
This hole wiþ wex to kepe þe lymaille In
And vnderstondeþ þatᵗ þis false gyn 1165
Was notᵗ made þere butᵗ it was maad bifore
And oþere þinges I schal telle more /
here aftirward which þatᵗ he wiþ him broughte
Er he cam þer to begyle him he þoughte 1169
And so he dide er þey wente a twynne /
Til he hadde torned him couþe he notᵗ blynne [leaf 186, back]
Itᵗ dulleþ me whan þatᵗ I ofᵗ him speke
On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke / 1173
Ifᵗ I wiste how. butᵗ he is heer and þere /
he is so variauntᵗ þatᵗ he abytᵗ no where /
Butᵗ takeþ heed now sires for goddes loue
He tookᵗ his cole ofᵗ which I spakᵗ aboue 1177
And in his hond he bar itᵗ priuely
And whiles þe prestᵗ couchide busily

The coles as I tolde ȝou er þis /
This Chanoñ sayde freend ȝe don amys 1181
This is nought couched as it oughte be
But sone I schal amenden it *quod* he
Now lat me medle *þer*wiþ but a while
ffor of ȝou haue I pite by seint Gyle 1185
ȝe ben right hoot I se wel how ȝe swete
haue heer a cloþ and wype awey þe wete
And while þat þe prest him wyped has
This Chanoñ took his cole I schrewe his fas 1189
And leyde it vppon abouen þe myddeward
Of þe Crosselet and blew wel aftirward
Til þat þe coles gonne faste brenne
Now ȝif vs drinke *quod* þe Chanoñ þenne 1193
as swiþe it schal be wel I vndertake
Sitte we doun and let vs merie make
And whan þe Chanoñs bechene cole
Was brent alle þe lymail out of þe hole 1197
In to þe Crosselet anon fel doun
And so it moste neede by resoñ
Syns it so euene aboue couched was
But *þer*of wiste no þing þe prest allas 1201
he demed alle þe coles liche goode
ffor of þe sleight no þing he vnderstoode
And whan þis alkamistre say his tyme
Riseþ vp sire prest and stondeþ byme 1205
And for I wot wel Ingot haue ȝe non
Goþ walkeþ forþ and bring a chalk ston [leaf 187]
ffor I wol make it of þe same schappe
þat is an Ingot if I may haue happe 1209
And bring wiþ ȝou a bolle oþer a panne
fful of water and ȝe schul see þanne
How þat oure busynesse schal happe & preeue
And ȝit for ȝe schul haue no mysbyleeue 1213
Ne wrong conceyt of me in ȝoure absence
I wol not ben out of ȝoure *pre*sence

But go with ȝou and come with ȝou agayn
The chambre dore schortly for to sayn 1217
þey opeynd and schette and wente forþ here weye
And forþ wiþ hem þey caryed þe keye
And comen agayn wiþouten eny delay
What scholde I tarie al þe longe day 1221
he took þe chalk and schoop it in þe wyse
Of an yngot as I schal ȝou deuyse
I say he took out of his owne sleeue
A teyne of Siluer euele mote he cheeue 1225
Which þat was but an vnce of weight
And takeþ heede now of his cursed sleight
he schop his Ingot in lengþe and in brede
Of þe theyne wiþouten eny drede 1229
So slyly þat þe prest it not aspyde
And in his sleeue again he gan it hyde
And from þe fyre took vp his matiere /
And in to þe Ingot it putte wiþ merye cheere 1233
And in to þe watir vessel he it caste
Whan þat him liste and bad þe prest as faste
loke what þer is / put in þin hond and grope
Thou schalt fynde þere siluer as I hope 1237
What deuyl of helle schuld it elles be
Schafyng of siluer siluer is p*ar*de
he putte in his hond and took vp a teyne
Of siluer fyn and glad in eu*er*y veyne 1241
Was þis prest whan he saugh þat it was so
Goddes blessyng and his modres also [leaf 187, back]
And all*e* halwes haue ȝe sire Chanon̄
Seyde þe p*r*est and I here malison̄ 1245
But and ȝe vouche sauf to teche me
þis noble crafte and þis sotilte
I wol be ȝoure in all*e* þat euer I may
Quoþ þe Chanon̄ ȝit wol I make assay 1249
The seconde tyme þat ȝe mowe take heede
And ben expert of þis and in ȝoure neede

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Anoþ*er* day in myn absence /
þis discipline and þis crafty science 1253
¶ let' take anoþ*er* vnce q*uod* he þo
Of' quyk' siluer wiþoute wordes mo
And do þ*er*wiþ as ȝe han don ar þis
Wiþ þat' oþer which þat' now siluer is 1257
þis prest' him busieþ in al þat' he can
To don as þis Chanōn þis cursede man
Comaundeþ him and faste blew þe fire
ffor to come to þeffecte of' his desire 1261
And þis Chanōn right' in þe mene while
Al redy was þis prest' eft' to begyle
And for a contynaunce in his hond bar
An holough stikke tak' heede and be war 1265
In þe ende of' which an vnce and no more
Of' siluer lymaile put' was al bifore
Was in his coole and stopped wiþ wex wel
ffor to kepe in his lymayl euery del 1269
And whiles þis prest' was in his businesse
This Chanoñ wiþ his stikke gan him dresse
To him anon and his poudre caste In
As he dede er þe deuel out' of' his skyn 1273
him torne I p*ray* to god for his falshede
ffor he was euer fals in oþe and dede
And wiþ his stikke aboue þe crosselette
þat' was ordeigned wiþ þat false gette 1277
he stereþ þe coles til it' relente gan
The wax agayn þe fyr as eu*er*y man [leaf 188]
But' it' a fool be woot' wel and moot' neede
And al þat' in þe hole was out ȝede 1281
And in to þe Crosselet' hastily it' fel
The prest' supposede noþing' but wel
But' busyed him faste and was wonder fayn
Supposyng' nouȝt' but' trouþe soþ to sayn 1285
he was so glad I can nouȝt' exp*r*esse
In no maner his merþe and his gladnesse

And þe chanoñ he profred eft' sone
Body and good ȝe q*uod* þe Chanōn soone 1289
þough pore I be crafty þou schalt/ me fynde
I warne þe ȝit' is þer more behynde
Is þer eny coper here Inne seyde he
ȝe sire q*uod* þe prest' I trowe *þer* bee 1293
Elles go bey som and þat as swithe
Now sire go forþ þy way and hy the
And went his way and wiþ þis coper he cam
And þis Chanōn in his hond it nam 1297
And of' þat' coper weyde out' but' an vnce
Al to symple is my tonge to p*ro*no*u*nce
his moustre and his wit' þe doublenesse
Of' þis Chanoñ roote of' Cursednesse 1301
he semyd freendly to hem þat' knewe him nought'
But' he was feendly boþe in werk' and þouȝt'
It' wyrieþ me to telle of' his falsnesse
And naþeles ȝet' wol I it' expresse 1305
To þat' entent þat' men may be war *þer*by
And for non oþer cause trewely
he putte þis vnce of' coper in to þe Crosselette
And of' þe fyur as swiþe he haþ it' sette 1309
And kast' in poudre and made þe prest' to blowe
And in his worching' for to stoupe lowe
As he dide erst and al nas but' a Iape
Right' as him liste þe prest' he made his ape 1313
And afterward in to þe Ingot' he it caste
And in þe panne putte it' atte laste / [leaf 188, back]
Of' water and in he put' his owne hand
And in his sleeue as ȝe byforn hand 1317
herde me telle he hadde a siluer teyne
he slyly took' it' out' þis cursed heyne
vnwetyng' þis prest' of' his false craft'
And in þe pannes botme he haþ it' laft' 1321
And in þe water rombleþ to and fro
And wonder pryuyly tok' it' vp also

þe coper teyne nought knowyng þis prest/
And hidde it and hente him by þe breest 1325
And to him spak and þus sayde in his game
Stowpeþ a doun by god ȝe ben to blame
helpeþ me now as I dide ȝou whiler
Put in ȝoure hand and lokeþ what is þer 1329
þis prest tok vp þis siluer teyne anon
And þanne seyde þe chanōn let vs gon
Wiþ þise þre teynes whiche þat we haue wrought
To som goldsmith and wite if it be ought 1333
ffor by my faiþ I nolde for myn hond
But if þei were siluer fyn and good
And þat as swiþe proued schal it be
Vnto þe goldsmith wiþ þise teynes þre 1337
þey wente and putte þise teynes in assay
To fyr and hamer might no man say nay
But þey were as hem ouȝte for to be
þis sottide prest who was gladder þan he 1341
Was neuer bryd gladder aȝeins þe day
Ne nightyngale in þe sesoñ of May
Was neuere non þat liste better to synge
Ne lady lustiere in Carolynge / 1345
And for to speke of loue and wo*m*manhede
Ne knight in armes don an hardy dede
To stonden in grace of his lady deere
þan hadde þis prest þis craft to lere 1349
And to þe chanoñ þus he spak and sayde
ffor þe loue of god þat for vs all*e* deyde / [leaf 189]
And as I may deserue it vnto ȝow
What schal þis receyt coste telleþ now / 1353
By oure lady q*uod* þe chanoñ it is deere
I warne ȝou for saue I and a frere /
In Engelond þ*er* can no man it make
No fors q*uod* he now sire for goddes sake 1357
What schal I paye tel me I ȝou pray
I-wys q*uo*d he it/ is ful deere I say

Sire at oo word if þat þe list it haue
ȝe schulle paye fourty pound so god me saue 1361
And ne were þe frendschipe þat ȝe dide er þis
To me ȝe scholde paye more y-wys
This prest þe somme of .xl. pound anon.
Of nobles fette and took hem eu*er*ychon 1365
To þis chanoñ for þis ilke receyt
Al his worchinge was fraude and deceyt
Sire prest he seyde I kepe for to haue no loos
Of my craft for I wolde it were kept cloos 1369
And as ȝe loueþ me kepeþ it secre
ffor and men knewen al my subtilte
By god men wolde haue so gret envye
To me by cause of my philosophie 1373
I scholde be deed þer were non oþer weye
God it forbede q*uod* þe preest what seye
ȝet hadde I leuer spenden al þe good
Which þat I haue and elles waxe I wood 1377
þan þat ȝe schulde falle in such meschef
ffor ȝoure good wil sire haue ȝe right good preef
Quoþ þe chanoñ and sire wol g*ra*unt m*er*cy
he wente his way and neuer þe prest he sey 1381
After þat day and whan þat þis prest scholde
maken assay at swich tyme as he wolde
Of þis receyt far wel it wolde not be
lo þus byiaped and bygyled was he 1385
þus makeþ he his introduccioñ
To bringe folk to here destruccioñ [leaf 189, back]
Considereþ sires how þat in eche astate
Bitwixe men and gold þer is debate 1389
So ferforþ þat vnneþes þer is non
This multiplyȝing blendeþ so many oon
þat in good faiþ I trowe þat it be
þe cause grettest of þis skarsete 1393
This philosophres speken so mystily
In þis craft þat men can not come þ*er*by

ffor ony witte þat men han now a dayes
þey may wel chitre and Iangle as don þis Iayes 1397
And in here termes sette lust and peyne
But to here p*ur*pos schul þey neuer atteyne
A man may lightliche lerne if he haþ ought
To multiplye and brynge his good to nouȝt 1401
lo such a lucre is in þis lusty game
A mannes merþe it wol torne all*e* to g*ra*me
And empte also grete and heuye purses
And make folk to purchacen curses 1405
Of hem þat han þ*er*to here good y-lent
O fy for schame þey þat haue be brent
Allas can þey nat fle þe fyres hete
ȝe þat it vsen I rede ȝe it lete 1409
lest ȝe lese al for bet þan neuer is late
Neuer to priue were to longe a date
þoug̃h ȝe prolle ay ȝe schull*e* it neuer fynde
ȝe ben as bolde as is bayard þe blynde 1413
þat blundreth forþ and p*er*il casteþ he non
he is as bold to renne a-gayn a stoon
As for to go bysydes in þe weye
So fare ȝe þat multiplie I seye 1417
If þat ȝoure yȝen may not seen arig̃ht
lokeþ þat ȝoure mynd lakke noug̃ht his sig̃ht
ffor þoug̃h ȝe loke neuer so brode and stare /
ȝe schulle nat wynne a myte in þat chaffare 1421
But wasten al þat ȝe may Rappe and renne
Wiþdrawe þe fir lest it so faste brenne [leaf 190]
Medleþ nomore wiþ þat art I mene
ffor if ȝe doon ȝour þrift is gon ful clene / 1425
And right as swithe I wol ȝou telle heere
What þat þe philosophres sein in þis matere
lo þus seiþ arnold of þe newe toun
As his Rosarie makeþ mencioun 1429
he seiþ rig̃ht þus wiþouten eny lye
þer may no man mercurie mortifie

But' if' it' be wiþ his broþeres knowleching'
how þat' he which þat first' seyde þis þing'/ 1433
Of' Philosophres fader was hermes /
he saiþ how þat' þe dragoñ douteles
Ne dyeþ not' but' if' he be slayn
Wiþ his broþ*er* and þat' is for to sayn 1437
By þe dragoñ mercurie and non oþ*er*
he vnderstood þat' bremston were his broþ*er*
þat' on of' Sol and luna were y-drawe
And þ*er*fore sayde he tak' heed to my sawe 1441
lat' no man busye him þis art' for to seche
But' he þat' þe entencioñ and þe speche
Of' philosophres vnderstonde can
And if' he do he is a lewed man 1445
ffor þis science and þis connyng' q*uod* he /
Is of' þe secre of' Secrees parde
Also þer was a disciple of' Plato
That' on a tyme sayde his mayster to 1449
As his book' Somer wil bere witnesse
And þis was his demaunde in soþfastnesse
Telle me þe name of' þe pryuy stoon
And plato answerde vnto him anon 1453
Tak' þe stoon þat' titanos men name
Which is þat' q*uod* he magnasia þe same /
Seyde Plato ȝee Sire and is it þus
This is ignotu*m* p*er* ignocius 1457
What' is magnasia goode sire I p*ra*y
It' is a water þat' is maad I say [leaf 190, back]
Of' elementes foure q*uod* Plato
Tel me þe roche goode sire q*uod* he þo 1461
Of' þat' water if' it' be ȝour wille
Nay nay q*uo*d Plato certeyn þat' I nylle.
þe Philosophres were sworn echon
þat' þey scholde discou*er*e it to no mon 1465
Ne in no book' it' write in no manere
ffor vnto crist' it' is so leef' and deere

þat he wil nat þat it discouered be
But where it likeþ to his deite 1469
Man to enspire and eek for to defende
Whom þat him likeþ lo þis is þe ende /
Thanne conclude I þus siþens þat god of heuene
Ne wole nat þat þe Philosophres neuene 1473
how þat a man schal come vnto þis stoon
I rede as for þe beste lat it goon
ffor who so maketh god his aduersarie
As for to worche eny þing in contrarie / 1477
vnto his wille certes neuer schal he þriue
þough þat he multiplie terme of his lyue
And þere a poynt for ended is my tale
God sende euery trewe man boote of his bale amen 1481

GROUP C. FRAGMENT IV.

§ 1. THE DOCTOR'S TALE.

CORPUS MS.

¶ The doctour of phisik [on leaf 190, back.]

THer was as telleþ vs Titus lyueus
A knight þat cleped was virgineus
ffulfilled of honoures and worþinesse
And strong of frendes and of gret richesse 4
A doughter he hadde by his wyf
And neuere hadde he mo in alle his lyf
ffair was þis mayde in excellent beaute
Abouen euery wight þat man may se 8
ffor nature haþ with souerein diligence
fformed hire in so gret excellence
As þough sche wolde say lo I nature
Thus can I forme and peinte a creature 12
Whan þat me list who can me countrefete [leaf 191]
Pigmalion nouȝt þough he alwey forge and bete
Or graue or peynte for I dar wel sayn
Apollus ȝephirus schulde worche in vayn 16
To graue or paynte or forge or bete
ȝif þey presumede me for to countirfete
ffor he þat is þe formour principal
haþ maad me his viker general 20
To forme and peynte ech erþely creature
Right as me lyst for al þing is in my cure
vnder þe moone þat may wane and waxe
And for my werke no þing wol I axe 24

My lord and I ben fully at acord
I made hire to þe worschip of my lord
So do I alle myn oþre creatures
Of what colour þey be or what figures 28
Thus semeþ me þat nature wolde say
This mayde was of age .xij. ȝeer and tway
In which þat nature haþ such delyt
ffor right as sche can paynte as lily whit 32
And rody as rose right wiþ such peynture
Sche peynted haþ þis noble creature /
Er sche was born vppon hire lymes fre
Were also bright as such colours scholde be / 36
And Phebus dyed haþ his tresses grete
like to þe stremes of his boornyd hete
And if þat excellent was hire beaute
A þousend fold more vertuous was sche 40
In hire ne lakkeþ no condicion
þat is to preise as by discrecion
As wel in body as gost chaste was sche
ffor which sche floured in virginite 44
Wiþ alle humilite and abstinence
Wiþ alle attemperance and pacience
Wiþ mesure eek and beryng of array
Discret sche was in answering alway 48
þough sche were wys as Pallas dar I seyn [leaf 191, back]
hire faucond eek ful wommanly and pleyn
None counterfeted termes hadde sche
To seme wys but after hire degre 52
Sche spak and alle hire wordes more and lesse
Sownyng in vertue and in gentillesse
Schamefast sche was in maydens schamefastnesse
Constant in herte and euere in busynesse 56
To dryue hire oute of hire slogardye
Bachus hadde of hir mouþ no maystrie
ffor will and þought doon venus encrece
As men in fyr wol casten oyle or grece / 60

And of hire owne vertue constreyned
Sche haþ ful ofte tyme hire seek feyned
ffor þat sche wolde flee þe companye /
Wher likly was to treten of folye 64
As is at festes. Reueles. and at Daunces
That ben occasioñs of dalyaunces
Suche þinges maken children for to be
To sone rype and bolde as men may se 68
Which is ful perilous and haþ ben ȝore
ffor al to sone may sche lerne lore /
Of boldenesse whan sche is a wijf
And ȝe maystresses in ȝoure olde lyf 72
þat lordes doughtres han in gouernañce /
Ne takeþ of my word no displesañce
þinges þat ben sette in gouernynges
Of lordes doughtres only for tuo þinges 76
Ouþer for ȝe han kept ȝour honeste /
Oþer ȝe han falle in frelete
And knowen wel ynoughh þe olde daunce
And konne forsake fully meschaunce 80
ffor euermo þer-fore for cristes sake /
kepeþ wel þo þat ȝe vndertake
A þeef of venysoñ þat haþ forlaft
his likorousnesse and alle his theues craft 84
Kan kepe a forest best of ony man [leaf 192]
Now kepeþ hem wel for and ȝe wil ȝe can
lokeþ wel to no vice þat ȝe assente
lest ȝe be dampned for ȝoure yuel entente 88
ffor who so doþ a tretour is certayn
And takeþ heed of þat þat I schal sayn
Of alle tresoun suffreyn pestilence
Is whan a wighht betrayeþ Innocence 92
ȝe fadres and ȝe modres eek also
þoughh ȝe haue children be it oon or mo
ȝoure is þe charge of alle here sufferañce
Whil þey ben vnder ȝoure gouernañce 96

Beþ war þat by ensample of ȝoure lyuynge
Owþer by necligence in chastysynge
þat þey ne perissche I dar wel seye
If þat þey don ȝe schulle ful sore abeye 100
vnder a schepperde softe and necligent
þe wolf haþ many a scheep and lamb torent
Sufficeth oon ensample·now as heere
ffor I moot torne aȝen to my mateere / 104
This mayde of which I telle my tale expresse /
Sche kepte hir self hir needed no maistresse
ffor in hire lyuyng maydens mighte rede /
As in a book euery good word and dede 108
þat longeþ to a mayde vertuous
Sche was so prudent and so bountyuous
ffor which out sprong þe fame on euery syde
Boþe of hire beaute and of hire bounte wyde 112
þat þurgh þe lond þey preised hire echone
That louede vertu saue envye alone
þat sory is of oþer mennes wele
And glad is of his sorwe and vnhele 116
The doctour makeþ þis discripcioñ
þis mayde wente on a day in-to þe toun
Toward þe temple wiþ hire mooder deere
As is of ȝonge maydens þe maneere 120
Now was þer a Iustice in þe toun [leaf 192, back]
That gouernour was of þat regioñ
And so bifelle þis Iuge his yhen caste
vppon þis mayde hire ful faste 124
As sche cam forthby þer þe Iuge stood
Anon his herte chaungeþ and his mood
So was he caught wiþ beaute of þis mayde /
And to himself ful priuely he sayde / 128
This mayde schal be myn for ony man
Anon þe feend in-to his herte ran
And taught him sodeynly by what sleighte
þe mayde to his purpos wynne he mighte 132

ffor certes by no force ne by no meede
him þought/ he was not' able for to speede /
ffor he was strong' of' freendes and eek' sche
Confermed was in such souereyn beaute 136
þat' wel he wiste he might' hire neuer wynne
As for to make hire wiþ hire body synne
ffor which wiþ gret' deliberacion
he sente after a clerk' in-to þe toun 140
The which he knew for subtil and for bold
This Iuge vnto þis clerk' his tale haþ told
In secre wise and made him to assure /
he scholde telle it' to no creature 144
And if' he dide he scholde leese his heed
Whan assented was þis cursed reed
Glad was þe Iuge and made glad chere /
And ȝaf' him ȝiftes precious and deere / 148
Whan schapen was al þis conspiracie
ffrom poynt' to poynt' how þat' his leccherie
Parformed schulde be ful subtilly
as ȝe schal here aftirward openly 152
hom goþ þis clerk' þat' highte Claudius
þis false Iuge þat' highte Apius
So was his name for it is no fable /
But' knowen for an historial þing' notable 156
The sentence of' it' soþ is out' of' doute [leaf 193]
þis false Iuge goþ now faste aboute
To hasten his delyt' al þat' he may
And so bifelle sone after on a day 160
þis false Iuge as telleþ vs þe story
As he was woned sat' in his consistory
And ȝaf' his domes vpon sondry cas
This false clerk' cam forþ a wel good paas 164
And seyde lord if' þat' it' be ȝour wille /
As doþ me right' vpon þis pitous bille
In which I pleyne vppon virginius
And if' þat' he wol seyn it' is not' þus 168

I wol proue it and fynde good witnesse
That soþ is þat my bille wol expresse
þe Iuge answerde of þis in his absence
I may not ȝiue diffinityf sentence 172
let don him calle and I wol gladly heere
Thou schalt haue right and no wrong heere
Virginius cam to wite þe Iuges wille
And right anon was rad þis cursed bille / 176
The sentence of it was as ȝe schul heere
To ȝou my lord sire Apius so deere
Scheweþ ȝoure pouere seruant Claudius
how þat a knight called virginius 180
Aȝens þe lawe aȝeins alle equite
holdeþ expres aȝeins þe will of me
my seruaunt which þat is my þral by right
Which from myn hous was stolen on a night 184
Whils sche was ful ȝong I wol it preue
By witnesse lord so þat ȝe ȝou not greue
Sche is nought his doughter what so he say
Wherfore my lord þe Iuge to ȝou I pray 188
ȝelde me my þralle if þat it be ȝour wille
lo þis was al þe sentence of þe bille
Virgineus gan vpon þe clerk biholde
But hastily er he his tale tolde / 192
he wolde haue defended it as scholde a knight [leaf 103, back]
And by witnesse of many a trewe wight
That al was fals þat seyde his aduersarie
This cursed Iuge wolde no lenger tarie / 196
Ne here a word more of virgineus
But ȝaf his Iuggement and seyde þus
I deme anon þis clerk his seruaunt haue
þou schalt no lenger in þin hous hire saue 200
Go bring hire forth and put hire in oure warde
þis clerk schal haue his þral þus I awarde /
And whan þis worþi knight virgineus /
þurgh þe assent of þe Iuge apius 204

Moste by force his deere doughter ȝyuen
vnto þe Iuge in lecchorie to lyuen
he goþ him hom) and sette him in his halle
And leet' anon his deere douȝter calle / 208
And with a face deed as ayssches colde
vppon hire humble face he gan biholde
Wiþ fadres pite stiking' þorugh his herte
Al wolde he not' from his purpos conuerte 212
Doughter q*uod* he virginea by þy name
þer ben tuo weyes oþer deþ or schame
That' þou most' suffre allas þat' I was bore
ffor neuer þou des*er*uedest' wherfore 216
To deyen with a swerd or wiþ a knyf'
O deere doughter endere of' my lijf'
Which I haue fostred vp wiþ such plesaunce
þat' þou ne were out' of' my rememb*ra*nce / 220
O doughter which þat' art' my laste wo /
And in my lijf' my laste ioye also
O ge*m*me of' chastite in pacience
Tak' þou þi deþ for þis is my sentence / 224
ffor loue and nat/ for hate þou most' be deed
My pitous hond moot' smyten of' þin heed
Allas þat' euer Apius þe say
þus haþ he falsly iugged þe to day 228
And tolde hire al þe cas as ȝe bifore [leaf 194]
han herd it' nedeþ not' to telle it more
Mercy deere fader q*uod* þis mayde
And wiþ þat' word sche boþe hire armes layde 232
Aboute his necke as sche was woned to de
þe teeres barsten out' of' hire eyen tuo
And sayde goode fader schal I dye
Is þer no grace is þer no remedye 236
No certes deere douȝter my*n* q*uod* he
þanne ȝif' me leue fader myn q*uod* sche
My deþ to compleigne a litel space
ffor p*ar*de Ieffa ȝaf' his douȝter grace 240

ffor to compleyne ar he hir sloughh allas
And god it wot noþing was hire trespas
But þat sche ran hire fader first to see
To welcome him wiþ gret solempnite 244
And wiþ þat word sche felle on swown anon
And after whan hir swownyng was agon
Sche riseþ vp and to hire fader sayde /
Blessed be god þat I schal deye a mayde 248
ȝif me my deth er þat I haue a schame
Doþ wiþ ȝour child ȝour wil a goddes name
And wiþ þat word sche prayeþ him ful ofte
þat wiþ his swerd he schulde hir smyte softe 252
And wiþ þat word on swoune doun sche fel
hir fader wiþ ful sorweful herte and fel
hire heed of smoot and by þe top it hente
And to þe Iuge he ȝaf it to presente 256
As he sat in his doom in consistory
Whan þe Iuge it say as saiþ þe story
He bad take him and honge him also faste
But right anon al þe poeple in þraste 260
To saue þe knight for rouþe and for pite
ffor knowen was þe fooles Iniquite
The poeple anon hadde suspecte in þis þing
By maner of þis clerkes chalangyng 264
That it was by passent of Apius [leaf 194, back].
They wisten wel þat he was lecchorous
ffor which vnto þis Apius þey gon
And casten him in prisoñ right anon 268
Wher as he sloughh himself and Claudius
þat seruant was vnto þis Apius
Was demed for to honge vpon a tre
But/ virgineus of his grete pite 272
Prayde for him þat he was exiled
And elles certes he hadde be bygyled
The remenant were honged more & lesse
þat consented were to his cursednesse 276

GROUP C. § 1. DOCTOR'S TALE. **Corpus MS.**

Here may men se how synne haþ his meryt /
Be war for noman wot' how god wol smyt'
In no degre ne in which maner wise
The worm of' conscience wol arise 280
Of' wicked lyf' þough it' so preuy be
þat' noman woot' of' it' but' god and he
Wheþer he be lewed man or lered
he not' how soone þat' he may ben afeered 284
þer-fore I rede ȝou þis counseil take
ffforsakeþ synne er synne ȝou forsake

[*on leaf* 194, *back*]

Owre oost gan for to swere as he were wood — *Pro*logus
harrow q*uo*d he by nayles and by blood — 288
This was a cursed þeef a fals Iustise
As schamful deþ as herte can deuyse
So falle vpon his body and his bones — [*]
þe deuyl I bekenne him al at ones — [*] 292
Allas to deere boughte sche hire beaute
Wherfore I say þat alle men may se
That ȝiftes of fortune or of nature
Beþ cause of deþ of many a creature — 296
hire beaute was hire deþ I dar wel sayn
Allas so pitously as sche was slayn
But her of wil I not p*ro*cede as now — [*spurious*]
Men haue ful often more harm þan prow — 300
But trewely myn owne mayst*er* deere — [leaf 195]
This is a pitous tale for to heere
But naþeles passe ouer is no fors
I pray to god so saue þin gentil cors — 304
And þin vrynals and þin Iurdanes
Thyn ypocras and þin Galianes
And eu*er*y box ful of þin letuarie
God blesse hem and oure lady seinte marie — 308
So mote I þe þou art a p*ro*pre man
And ylike a prelat by seint Runyan
Sayde I nouȝt wel can I nouȝt speke in terme
But wel I woot þou dost my*n* herte to erme — 312
That I almost haue caught a Cardyacle /
By Corpus bones but if I haue triacle
Oþer elles a draught of moyste and corny ale /
Or but I heere anoon a merye tale / — 316

GROUP C. § 2. DOCTOR-PARDONER LINK. **Corpus MS.**

Myn herte is lost for pite of þis mayde
þou belamy Iohn P*ar*doner he sayde
es right anon
eint Runyon 320
re at þis ale stake
nke and eten of a Cake
þise gentils bygonne to crye
lle vs of no rybaudye 324
ortal þing þat we may leere
þenne wol we gladly heere
wys q*uod* he but I moot þynke
honest þing whil þat I drinke 328

[*Part of the MS is cut away here*]

[1]bygynneþ þe P*ar*doneres tale folwynge

C^m xvj^m.

LOrdynges q*uod* he in chirches whan I preche
I peyne me to haue an hauteyn speche
I ryng[1] it[1] out[1] as round as goþ a belle
ffor I can al by rote þat[1] I telle 332
My teeme is alway oon and euer was
[1]malor*um* est[1] Cupiditas [[1] *Part of the MS is cut away here*]
[1]whennes þat[1] I come
A þenne my bulles schewe I alle and some [leaf 195, back]
Oure liege lordes seal is my patent
þat[1] schewe I first[1] my body to warant
That[1] no man be so bolde ne prest[1] ne clerk[1]
me to destourbe of[1] cristes holy werk[1] 340
And after þat[1] telle I forþ my tales
Bulles of[1] Popes and of[1] Cardinales
Of[1] Patriarkes and bisschoppes I schewe
And in latyn I speke wordes a fewe 344
To saffran wiþ my p*re*dicacioñ
And for to stere men to deuoicoñ
þanne schewe I forþ my lange cristal stones
I-crammed ful of[1] cloutes and of[1] bones 348
Relikes þey ben as wenen þey echone
þan haue I in latoun a schulder bone
Which þat[1] was of[1] an holy iewes scheep
Goode men say I takeþ of[1] my wordes keep 352
If[1] þat[1] þis bon be waisshe in any welle
If[1] kow or calf[1] scheep or oxe swelle
That[1] eny worme haþ y-bite or stronge
Touche he þis boon anon he schal be sounde 356

And ȝit also I seye forþermore
Of pokkes of scabbes and of euery sore
Schal euery scheep be hool þat of þis welle
Drinkeþ a draught and take keep what I telle 360
Wole euery wight er þat þe cok him croweþ
And do þing þat him oweþ
ffastynge drinke of þis welle a draught
As þilke holy iewe oure eldre ous taught 364
his bestes and his store schal multiplye
And sires also it heleþ Ielousie
And þey a man be falle in gelouse rage
Let make wiþ þis water his potage 368
And neuer schal he more his wijf mystreste
þey he in soþe a defaute by hire wiste
Al had sche taken prestes tuo or þre
heer is a myteyn eck as ȝe may see [leaf 196] 372
he þat his hond wol putte in þat myteyne
he schal haue multiplyyng of his greyne
When he haþ sowen be it whete or ootes
So þat of pens oþer elles of grootes 376
And men and wommen o þing warne I ȝou
If any wight be in þis chirche now
That haþ don synne orrible þat he
Dar nought for schame schriuen be 380
Or eny womman be sche ȝong or old
þat haþ ẏ-maad hire housbonde kokewold
Such folk schuln haue no power ne grace
To offre to my relikes in þis place 384
And who so fyndeþ him out of such blame
þey wole come vp and offre in goddes name
And I assoile him by þe auctorite
Which þat by bulle was y-graunted me 388
By þis gande haue I wonne euery ȝere
An hundred mark seþenes I was pardonere
I stande lik a clerk in many a pulpette
And schewe lewed poeple and doun þey sette 392

I preche so as ȝe haue herd byfore
And telle an hundred Iapes more /
þenne peyne I me to strecche forþ my nekke
And Est and west vpon þe poeple I bekke 396
As doþ a dowfe sittyng vpan a berne
myn handes and my tonge gon so ȝerne
þat is it ioye to se my busynes
Of auarice and such oþer cursednes 400
Is al my prechinge to make hem fre
To ȝiue here pans and namely vnto me
ffor myn entent is nouȝt but for to wynne
And noþing for correccioñ of synne 404
I rekke neuer whan þat þey ben beried
þoughh þat here soules gon a blake beryed
ffor certes many a predicacioñ
Sowneþ ofte tyme of yuel intencioñ [leaf 196, back] 408
So*m*me for plesaunce of folk and for flaterie
To ben auaunced by ypocresye
And so*m*me for veynglorie and so*m*me for hate /
ffor whan I dar nouȝt oþ*er*wise debate 412
þanne wil I stynge hem with my tonge smerte
In p*r*eching so þat þei schal nouȝt asterte
To be diffamed falsly if þat he
haþ trespassed to my breþ*er*en oþer to me 416
ffor þough I telle nouȝt his p*ro*pre name
Men schal wel knowe þat it is þe same
By symony and by oþer circumstaunces
þus quyte I folk þat doþ vs displesaunces 420
þus spitte I out my venym vnder hewe
Of holynesse to seme holy and trewe
But schortly my*n* entent I wil deuyse
I preche of no þing but of coueytise 424
þerfore my teeme is ȝit and euer was
Radix malor*um* est cupiditas /
Thus gan I preche aȝeins þe same vice
Such þat I vse and þat is auarice 428

That þough I my self be gulty in þat synne
ȝit kan I make oþer folk for to wynne
ffrom auarice and sore to repente
But þat nys noughť my principal entente 432
I preche no þing but for coueityse
Of þis matiere I ought ynough suffise
þenne telle I of ensamples many on
Of olde stories longe tyme agon 436
ffor lewed poeple louen tales olde
Whiche þinges can þey wel reporte and holde
What trowe ȝe whiles þat I may preche
And wynne gold and siluer for I teche 440
That I wol lyue in pouert wilfully
Nay nay I þoughť it neuer trewely
ffor I wol preche and begge in sondry landes
ffor I wole do no labour wiþ my*n* handes [leaf 197] 444
And make basketes and lyue þ*er*by
By cause I wol not beggen ydelly
I wole none of þe aposteles countrefete
I wole haue money chese and whete 448
Al were it ȝeuen of þe porest page
Oþer of þe porest wydewe in a village
Al scholde here children sterue for famyne
Nay I wol drynke þe likour of þe vyne 452
And haue a Ioly wenche in eu*er*y toun
But herkneþ lordynges in conclusion
ȝoure liking is þat I schal telle a tale
Now I haue drunke a draught of corny ale 456
By god I hope I schal telle ȝou a þing
þat schal by resoun ben at ȝour liking
ffor þough my selue be a vicious man
A more-ille tale ȝit I ȝou telle can 460
Which I am wont to p*r*eche for to wynne
Now holde ȝoure pees my tale I wol begynne

IN fflaundres whilom was a companye /
Of ȝong folk þat haunteden folye 464
As Ryot hasard stewes and tauernes
[1]Where as whyþ harpes lutes and gyternes[1] [1—1 *In a different hand.*]
They daunce and pleye at dyse boþe day and nigħt
And eeten also and drunken ouer al here migħt 468
þorugħ which þey doon þe deueles sacrifise
Wiþinne þe deueles temple in cursed wyse
þe Super*f*lues abhominable
here oþes ben so grete and dampna[b]le / 472
þat it is grisly for to here hem swere
Oure blessed lordes body they to-tere
hem þoughte Iewes rent/ him nougħt ynougħ
And ilke of hem at oþer synnes lowħ 476
And right anon þenne come tomblisteres
ffetys and smal ȝong fruytesteres /
Syngers with harpes bawdes wafereres
Suche ben verray þe deueles officers [leaf 197, back] 480
To kyndle and blowe þe fyr of leccherie /
That is annexed to glotonye /
The holy writ take I to witnesse / ¶ Nolite inebriari vino in
That leccherie is in wyn and drunkenesse ¶ quo est luxuria
Lo how þat drunken loth vnkyndely 485
lay by his doughtres tuo vnwetyngly
So drunke he was he nyste what he wrougħt
And þe*r*fore sore repente him ougħte [*spurious*] 487*b*
heroudes who so wole þe stories seche 488
þer may ȝe lerne and by ensample teche [*spurious*] 488*b*

Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste 489
Right at his owen table ȝaf his heste
To slen þe Baptist Ioh*a*n ful gulteles
Senek saiþ eek goode wordes douteles 492
he seiþ he can no difference fynde
Bitwix a man þat/ is out of his mynde
And a man þat is drunkelewe
But þat wodnesse is fallen in a schrewe 496
P*er*seuereþ lenger þan doþ drunkenes
O glotenye ful of cursednes
O cause ferst of oure confusioñ
O original of oure dampnacioñ 500
Til crist hadde brought out wiþ his blood agayn
lo how deere and schortly was to sayn
Aboute was þe cursed vilanye /
Corrupte was al þis world þurgh glotenye 504
Ad*a*m oure fader and his wyf also
ffro paradys to labour and to wo
Were dryuen for þat vice it nys no drede
ffor whiles þat ad*a*m fasted as I rede 508
He was in paradys and whan þat he /
Ete of þe fruyte defended on a tre
Anon he was out cast to woo and pleyne
O glotonye on þe wel oughte ous pleigne 512
O wiste a man how many maladyes
ffolweþ of excesse and of glotenyes [leaf 198]
he schulde be þe more mesurable
Of his diete sittyng at þe table 516
Allas þe schorte þrote þe tendre mouþ
Makeþ þat Est and West north and souþ
In erþe in aier in water men to swynke /
To gete a glotoun mete and drynke 520
Of þis matiere o poule wel canst þou entrete
Mete vnto wombe and wombe eek vnto mete
Schal god discryuen boþe as poule saiþ
Allas a foul þing is it by my faiþ / 524

¶ I*e*ronim*us* *contra* Iouini*a*n*um* q*uam*diu ieiunau*it* i*n* p*ar*adiso fuit co*m*medit et eiectus est stati*m* dux*it* vx*or*em

To say þis word and fouler is þe dede ¶ Esca ve tibi & vent*er* escis de*us* [P] a*urtem* & h*une in* ill*am* destre.
When men so drynkeþ of' þe white and þe rede /
þat' of his þrote he makeþ his pryue
þurgh þilke cursed sup*er*fluite 528
The apostel wepyng' saiþ ful pitously
Ther walken many of' which ȝou told haue I
I say it now wepyng' wiþ pitous voys
Ther ben enemys of' cristes croys 532
Of' which þe ende is deþ þe wombe is here god
O wombe o holy o stynkynge kod
ffulfilde of' dunge and of' corupcion
At' eyþer ende of' þe foule is þe soun 536
How gret' cost' and labour is to fynde
þise cookes how þey scampe and streyne and grynde /
And turnen substaunce in-to accident
To fulfille al þy likerous talent' 540
Out' of' þe harde bones knokken þay
þe mary for þay caste nought' away
þat' may go þurgh þe golet' softe and swoote
Of' spicerie of' leues bark' and roote 544
Schal ben his sause y-maad by delyte
To make him ȝit' a newer appetite
But' certes he þat' haunteþ suche delices
Is deed whiles þat' he lyueþ in þe vices 548
A leccherous þing' is wyn and drunkenes /
Is ful of' stryuyng' and of' wrecchednes [leaf 198, back]
O drunken man disfigured is þi face
ffoul is þi breþ foul art' þou to embrace 552
And þurgh þin drunken nose semeþ þi soun
As þough þou seydest' ay Sampson Sampson
And ȝit' god woot' Sampson drank' neuer no wyn
Thow fallest' as it' were a stiked swyn 556
Thyn tunge is lost' and alle þin honeste cures
ffor drunkenes is v*er*ray sepultures
Of' mannes wit' and his discrecion
In whom þat' drynke haþ dominacion 560

He can no counseil kepe it is no drede
Now kepe ȝou fro þe white and fro þe rede
Namly fro þe white wyn of lepe
þat is to selle in ffischstret or in Chepe / 564
This wyn of Spayne crepeþ subtilly
In oþer wynes growyng faste by
Of which þer ryseþ such fumosite
þat whan a man haþ drunken draughtes þre / 568
And weneþ þat he be at home in chepe
he is in spayne rigħt at þe toune of lepe
Nougħt at þe Rochel ne at Burdeux toun
And þenne wolen þey sayn Sampsoun Sampso*un* 572
But herkneþ lordinges o word I ȝou prey
That all þe souerein actes dar I say
Of victories in þe olde testament
þat þurgħ verray god þat is omnipotent 576
Were don in abstinence and in prayere
lokeþ þe bible and þere ȝe may it leere
lokeþ attyla þe grete conquerour
Deyed in his sleepe wiþ schame and dishono*ur* 580
Bledyng ay at his nose in drunkenes
A Capitayne schulde lyue in sobernes /
And ouer al þis avise ȝou rigħt wel
What was comaunded vnto lamuel 584
Nougħt Samuel but lamuel say I /
Redeþ þe bible and fyndeþ it expressely [leaf 199]
Of wyn ȝeuynge to hem þat han iustice
Nomore of þis for it may wel suffice 588
ANd now þat I haue spoke of glotonye
Now wole I defende ȝou hasardye
hasard is verray mooder of lesynges
And of disceipt cursed forswerynges 592
Blaspheme of crist and mansleynges also
Of batayle of tyme and of oþer mo
It is repreff and contrarie to honour
ffor to be holde a comune hasardour 596

And euer þe hyer he is of astate
þe more he is y-halden desolate
If þat a prince vse hasardrye
In alle gouernaunce and alle polesye 600
he is as by comun opynyoñ
y-halde þe lasse in reputacioñ
[Stilbon that was holde. a wise ambassato*ur*
Was sent in-to Corynthy. with ful grete hono*ur*] [Reg. 17 D xv, *leaf* 222]
ffro Calydonye to maken him alleaunce
And whan he cam him happede þis chaunce
þat alle þe grettest þat were of þis lande
Pleying at þe hasard he hem fande 608
ffor which as sone as þat mighte be
he stal him home aȝein to his cuntre
And sayde þer I wol nought lese my name
I ne wol nought take on me so gret diffame 612
ȝou to alleye to none hasardoures
Sendeþ oþerwise embassetoures
ffor by my trouþe me were leuer deye /
þan I to ȝou schulde hasardoures alleye / 616
ffor ȝe þat ben so glorious in honoures
Schal nouȝt aleye ȝou wiþ hasardoures
As by my wille ne as by my trete
þis wise Philosophre sayde to me 620
loke þou vse no pley of dees in þin hous
loke eek þat to þe king Demetrus
Sente him a payre of dees of gold in scorn
ffor he hadde vsed hasardye *þer* byforn [leaf 199, back] 624
ffor which he helde his glorie and his reno*u*n
At no value of reputacio*u*n
lordes mighten fynden o*þer* maner pley
honeste ynough to dryue þe day awey 628
NOw wol I speke of oþes false and grete
A word or tuo as oþer bookes entrete
Gret sweryng is a þing abhominable
And fals swerynge is more reprouable 632

þe hihe god forbad sweryng[t] at[t] al
Witnesse at[t] Matthew but[t] in special
Of[t] sweryng[t] saiþ þe holy Ieromie
þou schalt[t] swere soþ þin oþes and nought[t] lye / 636
And swere in doome and eek[t] in rightwisnesse
But[t] ydel sweryng[t] is a cursednesse
Bihold and see þat[t] in þe ferste table /
Of[t] heyhe goddes hestes honurable / 640
how þat[t] þe secounde heste of[t] him is þis /
Take nought[t] my name in ydelnesse amys /
lo raþer he forbedeþ such sweryng[t]
Or Omycyde or eny oþer cursed þing[t] 644
I say as by ordre þus it[t] standeþ
This knoweþ þat[t] his hestes vnderstandeþ
how þat[t] þe secounde heste of[t] god is þat[t]
And forþermore I wol þe telle al plat[t] 648
þat[t] vengeaunte schal nouȝt[t] parte fro his hous
þat[t] of[t] his othis is so outrageous
By goddes precious herte and his nayles
And by his blood þat[t] is in hayles 652
Seuen is my chaunce and þin is fyue and þre /
By goddes armes if[t] þou falsly pleye me
þis dagger schal þurgh þin herte go
þis fruyt[t] comeþ of[t] þe bicched bones tuo 656
fforsweryng[t] Ire falsnes homicyde
Now for þe loue of[t] crist[t] þat[t] for vs dyde
leueþ ȝoure oþes boþe grete and smale
ffor cristes sake and herkne to my tale [leaf 200] 660
þise ryetoures þre of[t] which I telle
longe er pryme ronge eny belle
Were sette hem in a tauerne for to drynke /
And as þey sate þey herde a belle clynke / 664
Byforn a corps was caryed to his graue
þat[t] oon of[t] hem gan calle to his knaue /
Go bet[t] quoþ he and axe redyly
What[t] corps is þis þat[t] passeþ faste by / 668

And loke þat þou reporte his name wel
Sire q*uod* þis boye it nedeþ neuer a del
It was me told er ȝe came here to oures
He was p*ar*de an old felawe of ȝoures 672
Al sodeynly was he slayn to nigħt /
ffor-drunke as he sate vp his benche vprigħt
Ther came a pryue þeef men cleped deþ
þat in his cuntre al þe poeple sleþ 676
And with his spere he smot his herte a tuo
And went his way wiþouten wordes mo
And maister er ȝe come in his p*re*sence / 680
he haþ a þousend slain þis pestilence / 679
Me þinkeþ it were necessarie /
ffor to be war of such an aduersarie /
Beþ redy for to mete him euermore /
þus taughte me my dame I say no more / 684
By seinte mary seyde þis tauernere
þe child saiþ soþ for he haþ slayn to ȝere
Hens ouer a myle wiþinne a gret village
Boþe man and wo*m*man child and page 688
I trowe his habitacioñ be þere /
To ben auysed gret wisedom it were /
Er þat he dede a man dishonour
ȝe goddes armes q*uod* þis ryetour 692
Is it/ such p*er*il wiþ him for to mete
I schal him seeke by wey and eek by strete
I make avow to goddes digne bones
Herkne felawes we þre ben all*e* ones [leaf 200, back] 696
let eche of vs halde vp his hand to oþ*er*
And eche of vs bycome oþeres broþ*er*
And we woln slee þis false traytour deþ
He schal be slayn he þat so many sleþ 700
By goddes dignite er it be nigħt
To-gidre haue þese þre here hertes higħt
To lyue and deye ilk of hem to oþer
As þougħ he were his owen sworne broþ*er* 704

And vp þey sterte al drunken in þis rage
And forþ þey gon toward þat village
Of which þe tauerner haþ spoke byforn
And many a grisly oþ þenne haue þey sworn 708
And cristes blessed body þey torent
Deth schal be deed if þat we may him hent/
Whan þey han goon nought fully a myle /
Right as þey wolde haue treden ouer a style 712
And olde and a pore man with hem mette
þis olde man ful mekely hem grette
And seyde þus now lordes god ȝou se
þe proudest of þese ryettoures þre 716
Answered agayn what carle wiþ harde grace
Why art þou al forwrapped saue þy face /
Why lyuest þou so longe in so gret age /
þis olde man gan loke in his visage / 720
And sayde þus for I can nought fynde /
A man þough þat I walked in-to ynde /
Neyþer in Cite ne in village
That wol chaunge his ȝouþe for myn age 724
And þerfore moot I haue myn age stille
As lange tyme as it is goddes wille /
Ne deþ allas nel nought haue my lyf
þus walke I lyk a resteles kaytyf 728
And on þe ground which is my moodres gate /
I knokke wiþ my staff erly and late
And saye leeue mooder lete me Inne
Lo how I wanse fleissch and blood and skyn [leaf 201] 732
Allas whan schullen myne bones ben at reste
Moder with ȝou wolde I chaunge my cheste
That in my chambre lange tyme haue be
ȝe for an here clout/ to wrappe me 736
But ȝit to me sche wole nouȝt do þat/ grace
ffor which ful hale and welked is my face
But sires to ȝou it nys no curtesye
To speken vntil an olde man vilenye 740

But he trespace in word oþer elles. in dede
In holy wryt ȝe may ȝoure self wel rede /
Aȝeins an olde man hoor vpon his heede /
ȝe schullen aryse wherfore I ȝiue ȝow rede 744
Ne doþ nouȝt to an olde man non harme now
No more þat men dede to ȝow
In age if þat ȝe so longe abyde
And god be wiþ ȝou wheþer ȝe go or ryde 748
I mot go þider þer as I haue to go
Nay olde cherl by god þou schalt nouȝt so
Sayde þis olde hasardour anon
þou partest nought so lightly by seint Ion 752
þou spake right now of þilke traitour deþ
þat in þis cuntre alle oure frendes sleeþ
haue heer my trouþe as þou art his aspye /
Telle wher he is or þou schalt abye 756
By god and by þe holy sacrament/
ffor soþly þou art on of his assent
To slen vs ȝonge folk þou false þeef
Now sires if þat it be to ȝou so leef 760
To fynde deþ turne vp þis croked wey
ffor in þat groue I lafte him by my fey
vnder a tre and þere he wole abyde
Ne for ȝoure bost he nyl him no þing hyde 764
Se ȝe þat Oke right þere ȝe schuln him fynde
God saue ȝou þat bouȝt aȝein mankynde.
And ȝou amende þus sayde þis olde man
And euery of þise ryetoures ran [leaf 201, back] 768
Til þey came to þe tree and þer þey founde
Of floryns fyne of gold y-coyned rounde
Wel neih a seuen buscheles as hem þought
No lenger þenne after deþ þey sought 772
But eche of hem so glad was of þe sight
ffor þat þe floryns so faire ben and bright
That doun þey sette hem by þe precious horde
The worste of hem he spak/ þe firste worde 776

Breþeren quod he take keepe what I say
My witte is gret ꝑ ꝑ I bourde and play
þis tresour haþ fortune to vs ȝiuen
In merþe and Iolyte oure lijf to lyuen 780
And lightly as it comeþ so wole we spende
Ey goddes precious dignite who wende
To day ꝑ we schulde haue so fair a grace
But mighte þis golde be caryed fro þis place 784
home to myn hous oþer elles vnto ȝoures
þanne mighte we seye ꝑ it/ were al oures/
þenne were we in heih felicite
but trewely by day it may nought be / 788
Men wolde say ꝑ we were þeues stronge
And for oure oughne tresour don vs honge
þis tresour moste y-karied be by night
As wysly and as sleighly as hit might 792
Wherfore I rede let loke among vs alle
Be drawe and let see wher þe cutte wol falle
he ꝑ haþ þe cutte wiþ herte blythe
Schal renne to toune and ꝑ ful swythe 796
To brynge vs breed and wyn ful pryuyly
And tuo of ous schuln kepe ful subtilly
þis tresour wel and if he wol nought tarien
Whan ꝑ it is night we woln þy tresour carien 800
By on assent wher as vs luste best
ꝑ oon of hem broughte in his feste
And bad hem drawe and loke on whom it wol falle
And it fille on þe ȝongeste of hem alle [leaf 202] 804
And forþ toward þe toun he wente anon
And also soone as he was y-gon
ꝑ on of hem spak þus vnto ꝑ oþer
þou wost wel ꝑ þou art myn owen sworne broþer 808
Thyn prophyte wol I telle þe anon
þou wost wel ꝑ oure felawe is gon
And heere is gold and ꝑ ful gret plente
That it schal departed be among vs þre 812

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But napeles if I can schape it/ so
pat it departed were among vs tuo
had I nought don a frendes turne to pe
pat oper answerde I not how pat mighte be 816
I woot wel pat pe gold is oure tuo
What schulde we seye what schulde we do
Schal it be counseil sayde pe firste schrewe /
And I schal telle in wordes fewe 820
What we schuln doon and bringe it wel aboute
I graunte q*uod* pat oper out of doute
pat by my trewpe I wol pe nouȝt bewreye
Now quop pe firste pou wost wel we be tweye 824
And tweyne of vs schuln strenger ben pan oon
loke whenne he is sette and panne anon
Aryse as pou woldest wip him pleye
And I schal renne him purgh pe sydes tweye 828
Whiles pat pou struggelist wip him in game
And wip py dagger loke pou do pe same
And penne schal al pis gold departed be
My deere freend bitwixe pe and me 832
penne may we bope oure lustes fulfille
And pleye atte dys right at oure owen wille
And pus accorded ben pese schrewes tweye
To sleen pe pridde as ȝe herde me seye 836
pis ȝongest which pat wente to pe toun
fful ofte in herte he rolleþ vp and doun
pe beaute of pese floreynes newe and bright
O lord quop he if so were pat I might [leaf 202, back] 840
Al pis tresour wynne to my self allone
per nys no man pat lyueþ vnder pe trone /
Of god pat scholde lyue as mery as I
And at pe laste pe feend oure enemy 844
Putte in his pouȝt pat he schulde poysoñ beye
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye
ffor why pe feend fand him in such lyuyng
That hadde leue him to sorwe brynge 848

ffor þis was vtterly his entent
To slen hem boþe and neuer to repent
And forþ he goþ no lenger nolde he tarye
In-to þe toun vnto a potycarie / 852
And preyde him þat he him wolde selle
Som poysoun þat he mighť his rattes quelle
And eek þer was a polkat in his hawe
þat as he sayde his Capons had y-slawe / 856
And sayde he wolde wreken him if he mighť
Of vermyn þat distroyed him by nighť
þe apotykaries answerde þou schalť haue
A þing þat als god my soule saue 860
In al þis world þer nys no creature
þat eten or drunken haþ of þis confecture
Noughť but þe mountaunce of a corn of whete
þat he ne schal his lyf anon forlete 864
ȝe sterue he schal and þat in lasse while /
þenne þou wolť gon a pace noughť but a myle
þis poysoun is so strong and so vyolent
þis cursed man haþ in his hand y-hent 868
þis poysoun in a box and seþenes he ran
In-to þe nexte strete vnto a man
And borwed him large botelles þre
And in þe tweyne þis poysoñ poured he 872
þe þridde he keped clene for his drynke
ffor al þe night he schop him to swynke
In karying of þe golde out of þat place
And whan þis ryetour wiþ sory grace [leaf 203] 876
had felled wiþ him his grete botelles þre
To his felawes aȝayn repayreþ he
What nedeþ it to sermone þer-of more
ffor righť as þay hadde cast his deþ afore 880
Right so þey haue him slayn and þat anon
And whenne þat þis was don þen spak þat oon
Now let vs drynke and sytte and make vs mery
And afterward we wolen his body bery 884

And aftirward it happed hem *per* cas
To take þe botel þer-in þe poysoñ was
And drank and ȝaf his felawe drynke also
ffor which anon þey storuen boþe tuo 888
But certes I suppose þat Auycenne
Wrot neuer in no Canoun ne in no fenne
Mo wonder sorwes of enpoysonyng
Thus hadde þise wrecches tuo here endynge 892
Thus ended ben þis Omycides tuo
And eek þe false enpoysonere also
O cursed synne ful of cursednes
O traytours Omycyderes o wikkednes 896
O glotenye o luxurie O hasardye
þou blasphemer of crist wiþ vilenye
And oþes grete of vsage and of pryde
Allas mankynde how may it betyde 900
þerto þin creatour / which þat þe wrought
And wiþ his precious blood þe bought
þou art so fals and so vnkynde allas
Now goode men god forȝiue ȝoure trespas 904
And ware ȝou fro þe synne of auarice /
Myn holy pardoun may ȝou alle warische
So þat ȝe offre nobles or sterlinges
Oþer elles seluer spones broches and rynges / 908
Boweþ ȝoure hed vnder þis holy bulles
Comeþ vp ȝe wyues offreþ ȝoure wulles
Ȝoure name I entre here in my rolle anon
In-to þe blisse of heuen schul ȝe gon [leaf 203, back] 912
I ȝou assoille by myn heih powere
ȝe þat woln offre as clene and eek as cleere
As ȝe were born and sires lo þus I *preche*
And Ih*e*su crist þat is oure soules leche 916
So graunte ȝou his pardoun to resceyue
ffor þat is best I wol ȝou nouȝt disceyue
But sires o word forgat I in my tale
I haue reliqes and pardoñ in my male 920

As faire as eny man in Engelond
Whiche were me y-ȝoue by þe popes hond
If eny of ȝou wole of deuocioñ
Offren and haue myn absolucioñ 924
Comeþ forþ anon and kneleþ doun heere
And ȝe schuln haue my pardoñ þat is deere
Oþer elles takeþ p*ar*doun as ȝe wende
Al newe and freissche at eu*er*y tounes ende 928
So þat ȝe offren alway newe and newe /
Nobles and pens which þat ben good and trewe
It is an honour to euerich þat is heere
þat ȝe may haue a suffisaunt p*ar*donere 932
To assoille ȝou in cuntre as I ryde
ffor auentures which þat may betyde
ffor p*er*aduenture þer may falle on or tuo
Doun of his hors and breke his necke a tuo 936
loke which a suerte it is to ȝou alle
þat I am in ȝour felaschipe y-falle
þat may assoille ȝou boþe more and lasse
Whan þat þe soule schal fro þe body passe / 940
I rede þat oure hooste schal begynne
ffor he is most envoluped in synne
Comeþ forþ sire Ost and offreþ first anon
And þou schalt kisse þe relikes euerychoon 944
ȝe for a grote vnbokel anon þy purs
Nay nay q*uod* he þenne haue I cristes curs
Let be q*uod* he it / schal nouȝt be so þeche
þou woldest make me kesse þin olde breche [leaf 204] 948
And swere it were a relyk of a seint
þoughñ it were wiþ þyn foundement depeynt
But by þe Crosse which þat seint Eleyne fand
I wolde I hadde þine coyllons in my*n* hand 952
In stede of relikes oþer of seintuary
let cutte hem of I wol þe helpe hem cary
þey schuln be schryned in an hogges tord
þis p*ar*doner answerde nouȝt a word 956

So wroþ he was he nolde no word say
Now q*uod* oure Oostꝫ I wil no lenger play
Wiþ þe ne with non oþ*er* angry man
Butꝫ rightꝫ anon þe worþy knightꝫ bygan 960
Whan þatꝫ he saugh þatꝫ al þe poeple l[ough]
Nomore ofꝫ þis for it is rightꝫ ynough
Sire p*ar*doner be mery and glad ofꝫ cheere
And ȝe sire Oste þatꝫ ben to me so deere 964
I pray ȝou þatꝫ ȝe kisse þe p*ar*doneere
And p*ar*doner I p*ra*y þe þatꝫ þou drawe þe neere
And as we dide letꝫ vs laughe and pleye 967
Anon þey kisse and ryden forþ here weye ¶ Explicitꝫ. fa*bul*a P*ar*don*arii*

GROUP B. (β. FRAGMENT III.)

§ 4. THE SHIPMAN'S TALE.

¶ Here bygynneþ þe schipmannes tale [on leaf 204]

A Marchaunt' whilom dwelled at' Seint' Denys Ca^m
That' riche was for which men heelde him wys xvij^m.
A wyf' he hadde of' excellent' beaute
And compynable and reuerent' was sche
Which is a þing' þat' caused more dispence
þen worþ is alle þe cheere and reuerence 1196
That' men haue doon at' festes and at' daunces
Suche salutaciouns and contynañces
Passeþ as doþ þe schadewe on a wal
But woo is him þat' paye moot' for al 1200
þe sely housband algates he moste paye
he moot' vs cloþe and vs arraye
As for his owen worschipe richely
In which aray we daunce Iolyly 1204
And if' þat' he nouȝt' may per aduenture [leaf 204, back]
Or elles luste no suche spenses endure /
But' þenkeþ it' is waste and y-loste /
Thenne moot' anoþer payen for oure coste 1208
Or lene us golde and þat' is perilous
þis noble marchand held a noble hous
ffor which he hadde alday gret' repayre
ffor his largenesse and for his wyf' was fayre 1212
þat' wonder is but' herkeneþ to my tale
Amonges alle his gestes grete and smale /
þer was a monk' a fair man and a bolde
I trowe a þritty wynter he was olde / 1216
That' euer in oon was drawyng' to þe place
þis ȝonge monk' þat' was so fair of' face

Aqueynted was so wiþ þis goode man
Siþenes þat here firste knowleche bygan 1220
That in his hous as ffamuler was he
As it is possible eny frend to be
And for as mekel as þe goode man
And eek þis monk of which þat I bygan 1224
Were boþe tuo y-born in o village
The monk him claymeþ as for cosynage
And he azein he saiþ nought ones nay
But was as glad þer of as foul of day 1228
ffor to his herte it was a gret plesaunce
þus ben þay knitte wiþ eterne alliaunce /
And ilke of hem gan oþer for to assure /
Of broþerhode whiles þat here lyf may dure 1232
ffre was daun Iohn and namely of dispense
As in þat hous and ful of diligence
To do plesaunce and also gret costage /
he noght forgat to ziue þe leste page / 1236
In al þat hous but after here degre
He zaf þe lord and seþins al his meyne /
Whan þat he came som maner honest þing
ffor which þey were al glad of his comyng 1240
As foul is fayn whan sonne vp ariseþ [leaf 205]
Namore of þis as now for it suffiseþ
But so bifeH þis marchaund vpon a day
Schop him to make redy his array 1244
Toward þe toun of Bruges for to fare
To byen þere a porcioun of ware
ffor which he haþ to Parys sent anon
A messanger and preyed haþ doun Ion 1248
That he schulde come to seint Denys and pleye
Wiþ him and with his wyf a day or tweye
Or he to Bruges wente in aH wyse
This noble monk of which I zou deuyse 1252
haþ of his abbot as him lust licence
By cause he was a man of heih prudence

And eek' an officer out' for to ryde
To see here graunges and here bernes wyde 1256
And vnto seynt' Denys he comeþ anon
Who was so welcome as my lord daun Iohn̄
Oure deere cosyn ful of' curtesye
Wiþ him brought' he a Iobbe of' maluesye 1260
And eek' anoþer ful of' good v*er*nage
And volatille as ay was his vsage
And þus I lete hem ete and drynke and pleye
This marchand and þis monk' a day or tweye / 1264
The þridde day þis marchand vp ariseþ
And on his needes sadly him aviseþ
And vp in to his countourhous goþ he /
To rekne wiþ himselue wel may be 1268
Of' þilke ȝeer how þat' it' with him stood
And how þat' he despended hadde his good
And if' þat' he encresed were or non
his bokes and his bagges many oon 1272
he leyþ bifore him on his countyng' bord
fful riche was his tresour and his hoord
ffor which ful faste his counterhous dore he schette
And eek' he nolde noman schulde him lette 1276
Of' his acountes for þe mene tyme [leaf 205, back]
And þus he sitte til it' was passed p*rim*e
Daun Iohn was rysen in þe morne also /
And in þe gardyn walkeþ to and fro 1280
And haþ his þinges sayde deuoutely
þis goode wyf' cam walkynge pryuely
In to þe gardyn þer he walkeþ softe
And him salueth as sche haþ don ofte 1284
A mayden childe came in hire companye
Which at hire luste may gouerne and gye
ffor ȝit vnder þe ȝerde was þe mayde
O deere Cosyn myn daun Iohn sche sayde / 1288
What' eyleþ ȝou so raþe to aryse
Nece q*uod* he it' aughte ynough̄ suffise

ffyue houres for to slepen on a nyght
But it were for an olde palled knight 1292
As ben þese wedded men þat lye and dare
As in a forme sitte alway an hare
Were al forstraught wiþ houndes grete and smale
But deere neece why be ȝe so pale / 1296
I trowe certes þat oure goode man
haþ ȝou laboured seþenes þe night bygan
þat ȝou were neede to resten hastily
And wiþ þat word he lough ful meryly 1300
And of his owne þought he wax al reed
This fayre wyf gan to schake hire heed
And sayde þus ȝe god wot al q*uod* sche
Nay cosyn myn it stant nouȝt so wiþ me / 1304
ffor by þat god þat ȝaff/ me soule and lyf
In alle þe rewme of ffraunce is þer no wyf
That lasse lust haþ to þat sory pley
ffor I may synge allas and welawey 1308
þat I was born but to no wight q*uod* sche
Dar I nouȝt telle how it stant wiþ me
Wherfore I þenke out of þis lond to wende
Or elles of myself to make an ende / 1312
So ful am I of drede and of care [leaf 206]
This monk bygan vpon þis wyf to stare
And sayde allas my neece god it forbede
That ȝe for eny sorwe or ony drede 1316
ffordo ȝoure self but telleþ forþ ȝoure greef
P*er*aduenture I may in ȝour mescheef
Counseile or helpe and þ*er*fore telleþ me
Alle ȝoure annoye for it schal be secre 1320
ffor on my portos I make an oth
þat neuer in my lijf for leef ne loþ
Ne schal I of no counseil ȝou bewreye
The same aȝein to ȝou q*uod* sche I seye 1324
By god and by þis portos I swere
þey men wolde me al to peeces tere

Ne schal I neuer for to go in to helle
Bewreye a word of þing þat ȝe me telle / 1328
Noughť for no cosynage ne alliaunce
But verreily for loue and affiaunce
Thus ben þey swore and her-vpon y-kiste
And ilk of hem tolde oþer what hem liste 1332
Cosyn q*uod* sche if I hadde a space
As I haue non and namely in þis place
þanne wolde I telle a legende of my lyf
What I haue suffred sethens I was a wyf 1336
Wiþ my*n* housband and þeigh he be ȝour cosyn
Nay q*uod* þis monk by god and by seint Martyn
he nys no more cosyn vnto me
þan is þis leef þat hangeþ on þe tre 1340
I clepe him so by seint Denys in ff*r*aunce
To haue þe more cause of acqueyntaunce
Of ȝou which I haue loued specially
Abouen aH wo*m*men sikerly 1344
This were ynough on my professioñ
Telleþ ȝoure greef lest þat he come a-doun
And hasteþ ȝou and goþ ȝoure wey anon
My deere loue q*uod* sche O daun Iohn 1348
fful leef me were þis counseil to hyde [leaf 206, back]
But out it mot it may no lenger abyde
myn housbond is to me þe worste man
þat euer was siþenes þe world bygan 1352
But siþenes I am a wyf it sit nouȝt me
To telle no wighť of oure pryuyte
Neyþer a bedde ne in non oþ*er* place
God schilde I scholde telle it for his g*r*ace 1356
A wyf ne schal nat seyn of hire housband
But aH honour as I can vnderstande
Saue vnto ȝou þus moche telle I schal
As help me god he nys nouȝt worþ at al 1360
In no degre þe value of a flye
But ȝit me greueþ most his nyggardye

And wel ȝe wootꝫ þatꝫ wo*m*men naturelly
Desyren þinges seuen as wel as I 1364
þey wolden þatꝫ here housbandes scholde be
hardy and wys riche and þ*er*-to fre
And buxum to his wyfꝫ and freissch a bedde
Butꝫ by þatꝫ ilke lord þatꝫ for vs bledde 1368
ffor his honour my selue to arraye
A sonday nextꝫ I moste paye
An hundred ffrankes or elles am I lorn
ȝetꝫ were me leuer þatꝫ I were vnborn 1372
þenne me were don a sclaunder or vilenye
And ifꝫ myn housbande eeke mighꝫt aspye
I nere butꝫ lostꝫ and þ*er*fore I ȝou preye
lene me þis so*m*me and elles motꝫ I deye 1376
Daun Iohn I say lene me þese hundred frankes
Par de I wol notꝫ fayle þe my þankes
Ifꝫ þatꝫ ȝou luste to do þatꝫ I ȝou pray
ffor atꝫ a certein day I wole ȝou pay 1380
And do to ȝou whatꝫ plesaunce and seruise
Thatꝫ I may do righꝫt as ȝou lustꝫ deuyse
And butꝫ I do god take on me vengaunce
As foule as hadde genylon of ff*ra*unce 1384
This gentil monkꝫ answerde in þis manere [leaf 267]
Now trewely myn owen lady deere
I haue q*uod* he on ȝou so gretꝫ a rouþe
Thatꝫ I ȝou swere and pligh̃te ȝou my trouþe 1388
Thatꝫ whan ȝoure housbonde is to fflaundres fare
I wol delyuer ȝou outꝫ ofꝫ þis worldes care /
ffor I wol bringen ȝou an hundred frankes
And wiþ þatꝫ he caughꝫtꝫ hir by þe schankes 1392
And hire enbraced harde and kissed ofte
Goþ now ȝoure weye q*uod* he al stille and softe
And letꝫ vs dyne as sone as euer ȝe may
ffor by my chilyndre itꝫ is p*ri*me ofꝫ þe day 1396
Goþ now and beþ as trewe as I schal be /
Now elles god forbede sire q*uod* sche

And forþ sche goþ as gelous as a pye
And bad þe cokes þat þey schulde hem hye 1400
So þat men mighte dyne and þat anon
vp to hir housbonde is þis wyf y-gon
And knokkeþ at his countour boldely
Quy la q*uod* he peter it am I 1404
Quoþ sche what how longe wol ȝe faste /
how longe tyme wol ȝe rekne and caste
ȝoure so*m*mes ȝoure bokes and ȝoure þinges
þe deuyl haue part on alle suche rekenynges 1408
ȝe han ynough parde of goddes sonde
Come doun to day and lete ȝoure bagge stonde
Ne be ȝe nought aschamed þat Daun Iohn
Schal fastyng al þis day elenge gon 1412
What lete vs heere masse go we dyne
Wyf q*uod* þis man ful lytel canstow dyuyne
The curious busynesse þat we haue
ffor of vs chapmen so god me saue 1416
And by þat lord þat called is seint yue
Skarsly amonges twelue tweye schuln priue
Continuelly lastyng vnto oure age
We may wel make chere and good visage 1420
And dryue forþ þe world as it may be [leaf 207, back]
And kepen oure estate in priuite
Til we be deed or elles þat we pleye
A pylgrymage or gon out of þe weye 1424
And þ*er*fore haue I gret necessite
vpon þis queynte worlde to auyse me
ffor euermore we mote stande in drede
Of happe and fortune in oure chapmanhede 1428
To fflaundres wol I go to morne at day
And come aȝein as sone as euer I may
ffor which my deere wyff I þe beseke
As be to eu*er*y wight buxom and meke 1432
And for to kepe oure good be curious
And honestly gouerne wel oure hous

þou hast ynough in eu*er*y maner wyse
That to a thrifty housbonde may suffise 1436
The lakkeþ non array ne no vitayle
Of Siluer in þi purs þou mayst nouȝt fayle
And wiþ þat word his countour dore he schette
And doun he goþ no lenger nolde he lette 1440
And hastyly a masse was þer sayde
And speedly þe tables were layde
And to þe dyner faste þey hem speede
And richely þis monk þe Chapman fedde 1444
And after dyner daun Iohn soburly
This Chapman took a part al pryuyly
he seyde him þus cosyn it standeþ so
þat wel I see to Bruges wolle ȝe go 1448
God and seint austyn spede ȝou and gyde
I pray ȝou Cosyn wysly þat ȝe ryde
Gouerneþ ȝou also of ȝoure dyete
And temp*er*ally and namely in þis hete 1452
Bytwixe vs tuo needeþ no straunge fare
ffare wel cosyn god schilde ȝou fro care
If eny þing þer be by day or by night
If it ligge in my power and my might 1456
That ȝe me wol comaunde in eny wyse [leaf 208]
It schal be doon right as ȝe wil deuyse
O þing er þat ȝe gon if þat it may be
I wolde preye ȝou for þe loue of me 1460
An hundred frankes for a wyke or tweye
ffor certeyn bestes þat I moste beye
To store with a place þat is owres
God helpe me I wolde þat it were ȝowres 1464
I schal nought fayle suerly of my day
Nought for a þousand frankes a myle way
But lete þis þing be secre I ȝou preye
ȝe schulle be payed wher þat I lyue or deye 1468
And fare now wel myn owen cosyn dere
Graunt m*er*cy of ȝoure cost and of ȝoure chere

This noble marchaunt gentilly anon
Answerde and sayde O Cosyn daun Iohn 1472
Now sikerly þis is a smal requeste
My gold is ȝoures whan þat euer ȝou leste
And nought oonly my gold but my chaffare
Tak what ȝou leste god schilde þat ȝe spare 1476
But o þing is ȝe knowe it wel ynough
Of chapmen þat here monee is here plough
We may creaunce whiles we haue a name /
But goldles for to be it is no game 1480
Pay it aȝein whan it liþ in ȝour ese
After my might ful fayn wolde I ȝou plese
þise hundred frankes he fette forþ anon
And pryuyly he took hit to daun Iohn 1484
No wight in al þis world wist of þis lone
Sauyng þis marchaunt and daun Iohn allone
þey dranken and romed out to pleye
Til þat daun Iohn rydeþ to his abbeye 1488
þe morne came and forþ þis marchaunt rydeþ
To fflaundres ward his prentys wel him gydeþ
Til he cam in to Bruges meryly
Now goþ þis marchaunt faste and bysyly 1492
Aboute his neede and byeþ and creaunceþ [leaf 208, back]
he neyþer pleyeþ at þe dys ne dauncеþ
But as a marchand schortly for to telle
he leet his wyf and þer I lete him dwelle 1496
þe sonday next þe marchaunt was agon
To seint Denys I-comen is Daun Iohn
Wiþ croune and berde freissch and newe schaue
In al þe hous þer nas so lite a knaue 1500
Ne no wight elles þat he nas fayn
ffor þat my lord doun Iohn was come agayn
And schortly to here poynt for to gon
þis fayre wyf acordeþ to daun Iohn 1504
And for þis hundred ffrankes he schulde al night
haue hire in his armes bolt vpright

And þis acorde p*ar*fourmed was in dede
In myrþe al nigh̃t / a busy lyf þey lede 1508
Til it was day þat daun Io̅h̃n went his way
And bade þe meyne far wel haue good day
ffor non of hem ne no wight in þe toun
haþ of daun Io̅h̃n righ̃t non suspecioun 1512
and forþ he rydeþ home to his abbay
Or wher him luste no more of him I say
This marchaunt whan þat ended was þe ffayre
To seint Denys he gan for to repayre 1516
And wiþ his wyf he makeþ feste and chere
And telleþ hire þat chaffare is so deere
þat needes moste he make a Cheuesaunce
ffor he was bounden in a reconysaunce 1520
To paye xx þousand scheldes anon
ffor which þis marchaunt is y-wont to gon
To borwe of certein frendes þat he hadde
A certeyn frankes and some wiþ him he ladde 1524
And whan þat he was come in to þe toun
ffor gret chierte and gret/ affeccioun
vnto daun Io̅h̃n he first him goþ to pleye
Nough̃t for to borwe of him no moneye 1528
But for to wite and se of his welfare [leaf 209]
And for to tellen him of his chaffare
As frendes don when þey ben mette in feere
Daun Io̅h̃n him makeþ feste and mery cheere 1532
And he him tolde aȝein ful specially
how he hadde brought ful wel and g*ra*ciously
þanked be god al hool his marchaundise
Saue þat he moste in aH maner wyse 1536
Maken a cheuysance as for his beste
And þenne he schulde be in ioye and reste
Daun Io̅h̃n answerde certes I am fayn
þat ȝe in hele be come home agayn 1540
And if þat I were riche as haue I blisse
Of twenty þousand scheldes scholde ȝe nouȝt misse

ffor ȝe so kyndely þis oþer day
Lente me golde as I can and may 1544
I þanke ȝou by god and by seint Iame
But naþeles I took vnto oure dame
Ȝoure wyf at home þe same gold aȝain
vpon ȝoure benche sche wot it wel certain 1548
By certein toknes þat I can hire telle /
Now by ȝoure leue I may no lenger dwelle
Oure abbot wol out of þis toun anon
And in his companye mot I gon 1552
Gret wel oure dame myn owen nece swete
And fare wel dere cosyn til we mete
This marchaunt wiþ þat was ful war and wys
Creaunsed haþ and eek payed in Parys 1556
To certein lumbardes redy in here hand
þis somme of gold and gat of hem þe band
And home he goþ mery as popyngay
ffor wel he knew he stood in such aray 1560
þat needes moste he wynne in such a viage
A þousend frankes abouen al his costage
his wyf ful redy mette him atte gate
As sche was wont of old vsage algate 1564
And al þat nigħt in mirþe þey besette / [leaf 209, back]
ffor he was riche and clerly out of dette
Whan it was day þis marchant gan enbrace /
his wyf al newe and kissed hire on hire face 1568
And vp he goþ and makeþ it wonder tough
No more q*uod* sche by god ȝe haue ynough
And wantounly aȝein wiþ him sche pleyde
Tille atte laste þat þis marchant seyde 1572
By god q*uod* he I am a litel wroþ
Wiþ ȝou my wyf þough it be me loth
And wote ȝe why by god as þat I gesse
ffor ye haue made a maner straungenesse 1576
Bytwixen me and my cosyn daun Iohn
Ȝe schulde haue warned me er I hadde gon

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þat he hadde ȝou an hundred frankes payed
By redy tokne and he him held yuel payed 1580
ffor þat I to him spak of cheuysaunce
Me semed so as by his contynaunce
But naþeles by god and heuen king
I þoughte nought to axe of him no þing 1584
I pray þe wyf ne do no more so
Telle me alway er þat I fro þe go
If eny dettour haþ in myn absence
I-payed þe leste þurgh þin necligence 1588
I might him axe a þing þat he haþ payed
þis was nas nough affered ne affrayed
But boldely sche seyde and þat anon
Mary I diffye þat false monk daun Iohn 1592
I kepe nought of his tokenes neuer a deel
he tok me certein gold þis wot I wel
What euele þedam on his monkes snowte /
ffor god it wot I wende wiþouten doute / 1596
þat he hadde ȝoue it me by cause of ȝou
To do þer wiþ myn honour and my prow
ffor cosynage and eek for bele chere
þat he haþ had fulofte tyme heere [1] [1 *Skip a leaf which is headed* Thopas.]
But seþins I see I stonde in such disioynt [leaf 211]
I wol answere ȝou schortly to þis poynt
ȝe haue mo slakker dettours þen am I
ffor I wol paye ȝow wel and redily 1604
ffro day to day and if so be I fayle
I am ȝour wyf score it vpon my tayle
And I schal paye as sone as euer I may
ffor by my trouþe I haue on my*n* array 1608
And nought on waste bestowed eu*er*y del
And for I haue bestowed it so wel
To ȝoure honour for goddes sake I say
As be nought wroþ but lete vs laughe and play 1612
ȝe schuln my ioly body haue to wedde /
By god I nyl nought paye ȝou but a bedde

ffor3iue it me myn owen spouse deere /
Turne hiderward and makeþ bettre cheere 1616
This marchaunt seyh þer was no remedye
And for to chyde it nere but folye /
Seþins þat þe þing may nought amended be
Now wyf he sayde and I for3iue it þe 1620
But by þin lyf ne be no more so large
kepe bet my good þis 3iue I þe in charge /
þus endeþ now my tale and god vs sende
Toylyng ynough vnto oure lyues ende ¶ Explicit 1624

Here endeþ þe schipmannes tale

WEl seyde by corpus d*ominus*
Now lange mote þou sayle by þe coste
Sire gentil mayster gentil marynere /
God ȝiue þe monk a þousand last quade ȝere / 1628
A ha felawes beþ war of such a Iape /
þe monk putte in þe mannes hood an ape /
And in his wyues eek by seint austyn
Draweþ no monkes more in to ȝoure In 1632
But now passe ouer and let vs seke aboute
Who schal now telle first of al þis route
Anoþer tale and wiþ þat word he sayde
As curteysly as it hadde ben a mayde [leaf 211, back]
My lady prioresse by ȝour leue
So þat I wiste I schulde ȝou nought greue /
I wolde deme þat ȝe telle schulde
A tale next if so were þat ȝe wolde 1640
Now wole ȝe fouche sauf my lady deere /
Gladly quoþ sche and sayde in þis manere

[*No gaps between the stanzas.*]

Here begynneth þe tale of Alma redemptoris
þe p*ri*oresses Tale. ¶ P*ro*log*e*

¶ Do*m*ine do*min*u*s* noster

O lord oure lord þin name how merueilous
Is in þis large word y-spredde q*uod* she
ffor nought only þyn laud precious
P*ar*fourned is by men of dignite 1646
But by þe mouth̄ of children þin bounte
Parformed is for on oure brest soukynge
Som tyme schewen þey þin heryynge 1649

¶ Wherfore in laude as I can best or may
Of þe and of þe white lyly flour
Which þat þe bar and is a mayde alwey
To telle a story I wol don my labour 1653
Nought̄ þat I may encrece hire honour
ffor sche hireself is honour and þ*er*to roote /
Of bounte next hire sone of soules boote 1656

¶ O mooder mayde O mayde moder fre
O busch vnbrent brennyng in moyses sight̄
That rauyscheþ doun fro þe deytele
þurgh̄ þin humbles þe gost þat in þe alight̄ 1660
Of whos vertu whan he in þin herte alight̄
Conceyued was þe fadres sapience
Help me to telle it in þin reuerence 1663

¶ Lady þin bounte and þin magnificence
þin vertu and þin gret humilite
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science
ffor som tyme lady er men preye to þe 1667
þou gost biforn and þin benignite
And getest vs to light̄ þurgh̄ þin prayere
To gyden vs vnto þin sone so clere [leaf 212]

My connyng is to wayk o blisful queene
ffor to declare þin grete worþinesse
That I ne may þe weighte nought susteene /
But as a childe of xij monthe elde or lesse 1674
That can vnneþes any word expresse /
Right so fare I and þ*er*fore I ȝou preye
Gydeþ my song þat I schal of ȝou seye 1677

[*THE TALE.*]

Ther was in a cite in a gret cite
Amonges cristen folk and Iewerye
Susteyned by a lord of þat cuntre
ffor foule vsure and lucre of vilanye 1681
hatful to crist and to his companye
And þurgh þe strete men mighte ryde or wende
ffor it was fre and open at euery ende 1684

A lytel scole of cristen folk þer stood
Doun at þe furþer ende in which þer were
Children an heepe y-come of cristes blood
That lered in þat scole ȝere by ȝeere 1688
Such maner doctrine as men vsed þere
This is to say to syngen and to rede
As smale children don in here childhede 1691

Among þis children was a wydewes sone
A litel clergoun vij ȝer of age
That day by day to scole was his wone /
And eek also wher he saugh the ymage / 1695
Of cristes mooder hadde he in vsage
As him was taught to knele a doun and seye
his aue marie as he goþ by þe weye 1698

Thus haþ þis wydewe hire litel child y-tauȝt
Oure blisful lady cristes mooder deere /
To worschipe ay and he forgat it nought
ffor sely child wol alday sone lere 1702
But ay whan I remembre me on þis matere
Seynt Nicholas stant euer in my presence
ffor he so ȝonge to crist dede reuerence 1705

¶ This child his litel book lernynge [leaf 212, back]
As he sat in þe scole at his primere
he alma redemptoris herde synge /
As children lerned here antiphoner 1709
And as he durste he drough̄ him ner and neer
And herkned ay þe wordes and þe noote /
Til he þe firste vers couþe al by roote / 1712

Nouȝt wiste he what þe latyn was to say
ffor he so ȝong and tender was of age /
But on a day his felawe gan he preye
To expounen him þis song in his langage / 1716
Or tellen him why þis song was in vsage /
This preyde he him to construe and declare /
fful ofte tyme vpon his knees bare / 1719

his felawe which þat elder was þan he
Answerde him þus þis song I haue herd say
Was maked of oure blisful lady fre
hire to salue and eeke hire for to pray 1723
To ben oure helpe and socour whan we deye
I can no more expounde in þis matiere
I lerne song I can but smale gramere / 1726

¶ And is þis song ymade in reuerence
Of cristes mooder sayde þis Innocent
Now certes I wol don my diligence
To konne it er Cristemas be went 1730

þoughh þat I for my prymer schal be schent
And schal [be] beten þries in an houre
I wol it konne oure lady to honoure 1733

¶ his felawe taughht him homward pryuyly
ffro day to day til he couþe it by roote
And þenne he sang it wel and boldely
ffro word to word acordyng to þe note / 1737
þries on a day it passeþ þurghh his þrote /
To scoleward and homward whan he went
On cristes moder sette was his entent/ 1740

As I haue sayde þurghout þe Iewerie
This litel childe as he came to and fro [leaf 213]
fful meryly þen wolde he synge and crye /
On alma redemptoris euermo 1744
The swetnes haþ his herte perced so
Of cristes mooder þat to hure to preye
He can nought stynte of syngynge by þe weye / 1747

¶ Oure firste foo þe serpent Sathanas
That haþ in Iewes his waspes neste
vp swalle and sayde O Ebrayke poeple allas /
Is þis a þing to ȝou þat is honeste / 1751
þat suche a boy schal walken as him leste /
In ȝoure despite and syngen of such sentence
Which is aȝein oure lawes reuerence / 1754

¶ ffro þennes forth þe Iewes han conspired
This Innocent out of þis world to chace
In homicidie þer-to han þey hyred
þat in an aley had a pryue place 1758
And as þe childe gan forby for to pace
þis cursed Iew him hente and heeld faste
And cutte his þrote and in a putte him caste / 1761

¶ I say þat in a wardrobe þey him drewe /
Wher as þise Iewes purgen entraille
O' cursed folk of heroudes al newe /
What may ȝoure euyl entent ȝou auayle / 1765
Mordre wole out certain it wol nought fayle
And namely þere honour of god schulde sprede
þe blood out cryeþ on ȝour cursed dede 1768

¶ O martyr sonded to virginite
Now maystow syngen folwyng euer in oon
The white lambe celestial quod he /
Of which þe grete eu*au*ngelist seint Iohn 1772
In Pathmos wrot which seiþ þey þat gon
Byforn þis lambe and synge a song al newe
þat neuer fleisschly wo*m*men þey knewe 1775

¶ þis pore wydewe wayteþ al þat night
After þis litel childe but hom cam he nouȝt
ffor whom as sone as it was dayes light [leaf 213, back]
Wiþ face pale for drede and busy þought 1779
Sche haþ at scole and elles wher him sought
Til fynally sche gan so fer aspye
þat he was seyn last in þe Iewerye 1782

¶ With moodres pyte in hire brest enclosed
Sche goþ as þough sche were half out of mynde /
To euery place where sche haþ supposed
By lyklyhede hire childe for to fynde 1786
And euer on cristes moder meke and kynde
Sche cryed and at þe laste þus sche wrought
Among þe cursed Iewes sche him sought 1789

Sche freyneþ and sche preyeþ pitously
To euery Iewe þat dwelt in þilke place
To telle hire if hire child went hem by
They sayden nay but ihe*sus*[1] of his grace [[1] MS ihc]

ȝaf' in hire þought' wiþ-in a litel space
þat' in þat' place after hire sone sche cryede
þer he was caste in a putte besyde 1796

¶ O grete lord þat' p*ar*formed þin laude
By mouþ of' Innocence lo here þy might'
This gemme of' chastite þis Emeraude
And eek' of' martirdome þe ruby bright' 1800
þer he wiþ þrote y-korue lay vpright'
he alma redemptoris gan to synge
So loude þat' al þe place gan to rynge 1803

¶ The cristen folk' þat' þurgh þe strete went
In comen for to wondren on þis þing'
And hastely þey for þe prouost' sent
he came anon wiþouten eny taryyng' 1807
And herieþ crist' þat' is of' heuen king'
And eek' his mooder honour of' mankynde
And after þat' þe Iewes let' he bynde 1810

This childe wiþ pitous lamentacion
vp taken syngyng' his song' alway
And with honour and gret p*ro*cession /
They carien him to þe next' abbay [leaf 214]
his moder swownyng' by þe bere lay
vnneþes mighte þe peeple þat' was þere
This newe rachel bringe fro his bere 1817

Wiþ torment' and with schameful deþ ilkon
This prouost' doþ þis Iewes for to sterue
That' of' þis moerdre wiste and þat' anon
he nolde non such cursednesse obserue / 1821
Euel schal haue þat' euel wol deserue
þerfore with wilde hors he dede him drawe
And after þat' he hynge him by þe lawe 1824

¶ Vpon þis beere ay liþ þis Innocent
Biforn þe chief auter whiles masse last
And after þat þe abbot/ wiþ his couent
hadde spedde him for to burye him als fast 1828
And whan þey halywater on him cast
ȝit spak þe child when spreynt was þe holy water
And sang O alma redemptoris mater 1831

¶ This abbot which þat was an holy man
As monkes be*n* or elles oughten to [1] be [[1] ? to *later*]
This ȝonge childe to coniure he bigan
And sayde O deere childe I hailse þe 1835
By vertu of þe holy trinite
Telle me what is þy cause for to synge
Siþenes þat þy þrote is kutte at my semynge 1838

¶ My þrote is cutte vnto my nekke bon
Sayde þis childe and as by way of kynde
I schulde haue deyed ȝe long tyme agon
But ih*esu* crist as ȝe in bookes fynde 1842
Wol þat his glorie laste and be in mynde
And for þe worschipe of his moder deere /
ȝet may I synge O alma lowde and cleere 1845

¶ This welle of mercy crystes mooder swete
I loued alwey as after my konnyng
And whan þat I my lyff schulde lete
To me sche cam and bad me for to synge 1849
This anteme verraily in my mynde deynge [leaf 214, back]
as ȝe haue herd and when þat I hadde songe
Me þought sche leyde a greyn vpon my tonge / 1852

¶ Wherfore I synge and synge moot certein
In honour of þe blisful martir fre
Til of my tonge of taken is þe greyn
And after þat sayde sche þus to me 1856

My litel childe now wol I fecche þe
Whan þat þy grein is fro þy tonge y-take
Be nought a-gast I wol þe nought forsake 1859

¶ þis holy monk þis abbot him mene I
his tunge out caught / and took awey þe greyn
And he ȝaf up þe gost ful softely
And when þis abbot / hadde þis wonder seyn 1863
his salte teeres stryked doun as reyn
And gruff he fell al plat vnto þe grounde
And stille he lay as he hadde ben y-bounde / 1866

¶ þe couent eek lay vppon þe pauyment
Wepyng and herying cristes moder deere
And after þat þay ryse and for ben went
And toke awey þis martir fro his bere / 1870
And in a tombe of marbiłł stones clere
Enclosen þey his litel body swete
Ther he is now god leue vs for to mete 1873

¶ O ȝonge hewe of lincolle slayn also
Wiþ cursed Iewes as it is notable
ffor it nys but a litel while ago
Preye eek for vs we synful folk vnstable 1877
That of his mercy god so merciable
On vs his grete mercy multiplye
ffor reuerence of his mooder marie AmeN ¶ Explicit //

Whan seyde was þis tale eu*er*y man
As sober was þat wonder was to se
Til þat owre Oste Iape þo bygan
And þenne at erst he loked vpon me ¶ Chaucere
And sayde þus what man art þou q*uo*d he
Thou lokest as þou woldest fynde an hare / [leaf 215]
ffor euer vpon þe ground I se þe stare 1887

Approche ner and loke meryly
Now ware ȝou sires and let þis man han place
he in þe waste is schapen as wel as I
This were a popet in armes to embrace 1891
ffor any wo*m*man smal and fair of face
he semeþ eluyssch̄ by his contynaunce
ffor vnto no wigh̄t doþ he dalyaunce 1894

Say now somwhat seþins oþer folk han sayd
Telle vs a tale of merþe and þat anon
Oste q*uod* I ne be nough̄t yuel a-payde
ffor oþer tale certes can I non 1898
But of a Ryme I lerned longe agon
ȝe þat is good q*uod* he schuln we here
Som deynte þing me þinkeþ by his cheere. 1901

[*No gaps between the stanzas in the MS.*]

¶ Here bygynneth þe tale of Chaucer of sire Thopas
Ca^m xix^m

[*Fytte I.*]

LEsteneþ lordes in good entent
And I wol telle verament
Of miracle and solace 1904
Al of a knight was fayr and gent
In bataille and in tornament
His name was sire Thopace 1907

I-born he was in ferre cuntre
In fflaundres al beȝonde þe se
At poperyng in þe place 1910
his fader was a man ful fre
And lord he was of þat contre
As it was goddes grace 1913

Sire Thopas was a doughty swayn
Whyt was his face as Payndemayn
his lyppes reed as Rose 1916
his robe is like Scarlet en grayn
And I ȝou telle in good certayn
he hadde a semely nose 1919

his berd his heer was lik saffroun
That to his gurdel straught a-doun [leaf 215, back]
his schoon of Cordewayne / 1922
Of Bruges were his hosen broun
his robe was of Ciclatoun
That coste many a Iayne 1925

he couþe hunte at wylde deer
And Ryde an haukynge by þe ryuer
Wiþ gray goshauk on honde 1928
Ther to he was a good archer
Of wrastlyng was þer non his peer
Ther any man schulde stonde 1931

fful many a mayde brigħt in bour
They mourne for him paramour
When þey were bet to slepe 1934
But he was chaste and no lecchour
And swete as is þe bremble flour
þat bereþ þe rede hepe 1937

¶ And so byfeħ vpon a day
ffor soþe as I ȝou telle may
Sire Thopas wolde out ryde 1940
he worþe vpon his steede gray
And in his hande a launcegay
A long swerd by his syde 1943

he prikeþ þurgħ a fair forest
Ther Inne is many a wilde beest
ȝe boþe bucke and hare 1946
And as he prikeþ northħ and Est
I telle ȝou him hadde almest
Betydde a sory care 1949

Ther springen herbes grete and smale
The lycoris and þe Setuale
And many a clowe Gylofre 1952
And notemuges to put in ale
Wheþer it be moyst or stale
Or for to leye in Coffre 1955

The briddes syngen it is nouȝt nay
The sperhauk and þe popyngay [leaf 216]
That Ioye it was to heere / 1958
The þrostilkok made eek his lay
The woode dowfe vpon þe spray
Sche sang ful loude and cleere 1961

Sire Thopas feH in loue longyng
And whan he herde þe þrustel syng
And priked as he were wood 1964
his faire steede in his prikynge
So swette þat men mighT him wrynge
his sydes were al blood 1967

Syre Thopas eek so wery was
ffor prykyng on þe softe gras
So fers was his corage 1970
That doun he leyde him in þat place
To maken his steede som solace
ffor he was so sauage 1973

O seynt mary benedicite
What eyleþ þis loue at me
To bynde me so sore 1976
Me dremed al þis night parde
An elf queen schal my lemman be
And slepe vnder my gore 1979

An Elf queene wol I loue ywys
ffor in þis worlde no man is
Worþy to be my make 1982
in toune
AH oþre wo*m*men I forsake
And to an elf queen I me bytake
By dale and eek by downe 1986

In to his sadel he cam anon
And prikeþ ouer stile and ston
And elf' queene for to aspie 1989
Til he so longe haþ ryden and gon
That' he fond in a priue woon
The cuntre of fayrye 1992
¶ So wylde
ffor in þat' cuntre nas þer non [leaf 216, back]
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
Neyþer wijf' ne childe / 1996

Til him þer cam a Ioly geaunt'
his name was cleped sire Olyphaunt
A p*er*ilous man of' dede 1999
he seyde child by Termagaunt
But' if' þou prike out' of' myn haunt'
Anon I slee þin steede 2002
¶ Wiþ mace
here is þe queene of' fayerye
Wiþ harpe and pype and Synphonye
dwellynge in þis place / 2006

The childe seyde so mote I þe
To morne wol I meeten þe
When I haue myn armure 2009
And ȝit' I hope p*ar* ma fay
That' þou schalt' wiþ þis launcelay
Abeyen it' ful sore 2012
¶ þurgh̄ þine mawe /
Schal I perce if' I may
Or it' be fully pryme day
ffor heere þou schalt' be slawe / 2016

GROUP B. § 8. SIR THOPAS. **Corpus MS.**

Sire Thopas drow a bak' ful faste
þis geaunt' at' him stones caste /
Out' of' a felle staf' slynge 2019
But' faire askapeþ child Thopas
And al it' was þurgh goddes gras
And þurgh his faire berynge 2022

ȝit' lesteneþ lordes to my tale/
Murier þen þe nightyngale
ffor now I wole ȝou roune / 2025
how sire Thopas with sydes smale /
Prykyng' ouer downe and dale /
Is come aȝain to toune 2028

his mery men comaunded he /
To maken him boþe game and glee
ffor needes moste he fight' 2031
Wiþ o geaunt' with hedes þre
ffor p*ar*amo*ur* and Iolyte · [*go back to leaf* 210
Of' on þat' schon ful bright' 2034

Do come he seyde myne menstrales
And gestours for to telle vs tales /
Anon in myn armyng' 2037
Of' Romances þat' ben realles /
Of' popes and of' Cardynalles /
And eek' of' loue lykyng' 2040

They fette him fers' þe [1] swete wyn [[1] *wrongly dotted under*]
[. . . . . [*In margin of MS, in a later hand,* And mede eek in a mas . . . & ryal spicerye. Of gyngebreed þat was f . .]
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
And lycoryus and eek' comyn
Wiþ sucre þat' is trye 2046

He dede next' his white leere
Of' cloþ of' lake fyn and clere
A breche and eek' a scherte 2049
And next' his scherte an aketoun
And ouer þat' an habergoun
ffor persyng' of' his herte 2052

And ouer þat' a fyn hauberk'/
Was al y-wrought' of' Iewes werk'
fful strong' it' was of' plate 2055
And ouer þat' his cote armure /
As whyt' as is a lyly flour
In which he wole debate 2058

his schelde was al of' gold so red
And þer Inne was a boores heed
A charbokil him[1] besyde [[1] bi his syde *in a later hand*] 2061
And þer he swore on ale and breed
That' þe geaunt' schulde be deed
betyde what' betyde 2064

his Iambes were of' quyrboyly
his swerdes scheþe of' yuory
his helme of' latoun bright' 2067
his sadel was of' ruel bon
his bridel as þe sonne schon
Or as þe mone so light' 2070

his spere was of' fyn Cypres
That' bedeþ werre and no þing' pees [*back of leaf* 210]
The heed ful scharpe y-grounde 2073
his steede was al dappel gray
It' goþ an ambel by þe way
fful softely and rounde 2076

In londe
Lo lordes myne heere[1] a fytte [[1] ys, *put in by a later hand*]
If[t] ȝe wole eny more of[t] hitte
To telle it[t] wol I fonde 2080

[*Fytte II.*]

Now halde ȝoure mouþe *par* charite
Boþe knigh̄t[t] and lady fre
And herkneþ to my spelle 2083
Of[t] bataile and of[t] chiualry
And of[t] ladyes loue drery
Anon I wol ȝou telle 2086

Men speke of[t] Romance of[t] prys
Of[t] horn childe and of[t] ypotys
Of[t] Beuys and sire Gy 2089
Of[t] sire libeus and pleyndamour
But[t] sire Thopas he bereþ þe flour
Of[t] real chiualry 2092

his goode steed al he bestrod
And forþ upon his way he glod
As sparcles out[t] of[t] þe bronde 2095
vpon his crest[t] he bar a tour
And *þer* Inne styked a lily flour
God schilde his corps fro schonde 2098

And for he was a knigh̄t[t] aunterous
he nolde slepen in non hous
But[t] liggen in his hood 2101
his brighte helme was his wanger
And by him bayteþ his destrer
Of[t] herbes fyne and goode 2104

GROUP **B.** § **8.** SIR THOPAS. **Corpus MS.**

[. . . . . [*In a later hand, in the margin, is* { him self drank water of þe welle / as dede þe knyȝt sire Percyuelle / so worþili vnder wede]

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 2108

NO more of þis for goddes dignite [*on leaf* 210, *back*]
Quoþ oure hoste for þou makest me
So wery of þy lewednes
That also wisly god me bles 2112
Myn eres ake of þin darsty speche [*go on to leaf* 217]
Now such a rymere þe deuel y beteche
This may be wel rym dogereH q*uod* he
Why so q*uod* I why wilt þou lette me 2116
More of my tale þan anoþ*er* man
Seþens it is þe beste Rym I can
By god q*uod* he pleynly I þe say
þou schalt no lenger rymen heere to day 2120
Thow dost nought elles but dispendest tyme
Sire at O word þou schalt no lengere ryme
Let se wheþ*er* þou canst telle ought in geste
Or telle in prose somwhat at þe leste 2124
In which þer be som merþe and som doctrine
Gladly quod I by goddes swete pyne
I wol ȝou telle a litel þing in prose
þat oughte like ȝou as I suppose / 2128
Or elles certeyn ȝe ben to daungerous
It is a moral tale vertuous
Al be it tolde somtyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folk as I schal ȝou deuyse 2132
As þus ȝe wote euery eu*au*ngeliste
That telleþ vs of ihesu criste
Ne saiþ nouȝt al þing as his felawe doþ
But natheles here sentence is al soþ 2136
And aH acorden as in here sentence
Al be þer in here tellyng difference

ffor some of hem seyn more and some lesse
Whan þey his pytous passioun expresse 2140
I mene of mark matheu luke and Iohn
But douteles here sentence is al on
Therfore lordinges alle I ȝou beseche
If þat ȝe þinke I varie in my speche 2144
As þus if þat I telle somwhat more
Of prouerbis þen ȝe haue herd byfore
Comprehendit in þis litel tretis heere
To enforce with þeffecte of my matiere 2148
And þough I nadde[1] þe same wordes saye [leaf 217, back] [1 nat *in a later hand*]
As ȝe han herd ȝit to alle ȝou I praye
Blameþ me nought for as in my sentence
ȝe schal nought fynde mochil difference / 2152
ffro þe sentence of þe tretys lyyte[2] [2 lite *in a later hand*]
After þe which þis mery tale I wryte
And[3] herkene what I schal seye [3 *þerfore added on margin of MS in another hand*]
And let me telle my tale I ȝou preye / 2156

[*There are no line-numbers or breaks between the paragraphs in the MS. Tyrwhitt's breaks are kept here to prevent slight differences in the Six Texts throwing out many lines.*]

[*Corpus MS, on leaf* 217, *back.*]

¶ C^m^. xx^m^.

Here bygynneþ Chauceres tale of Melibe and his wyf Prudence and his doughter Sapience

[2157] A ȝong man whilom called Melibe mighty & riche bigate vpon his wyf þat called was Prudence. a doughter which þat cleped was Sapience

[2158] ¶ vpon a day felle þat he for his disporte is went in to þe feeldes him to pleye [2159] his wyf and eek his doughter haþ he lefte wiþinne his hous of which þe dores weren faste schette. [2160] ffoure of his olde foos han it aspyed. and setten ladderes to þe walles of his hous and by þe wyndowes ben y-entred [2161] ¶ and beeten his wyf and wounded his doughter with fyue mortaille woundes in .v. sondry places. [2162] þis is to say in hire feet in hire hand. in hire eeres in hire nose in hire mouþ ¶ and laften hire for deed and wenten here wey

[2163] ¶ When Melibe*us* retourned was aȝein in-til his hous and sawe al þis meschief ¶ he y-like a mad man rendyng his cloþes gan to weepe and crye

[2164] ¶ Prudence his wyf as ferforþ as sche dorste bysought him of his weepyng for to stynte [2165] ¶ but nouȝt for-þy he gan to wepe and crye euer lenger þe more

[2166] ¶ This noble wyf prudence remembred hire on þe sentence of Ovide in his bok þat cleped is þe remedy of loue where he saiþ [2167] he is a fool þat distourbeþ þe mooder for to wepe in þe deþ of hire childe til sche haue wepte hire fille as for a certein tyme [2168] Then schal man don his diligence *with* amyable wordes hire to comforte and to p*reye* hire of

hire wepyng' for to stynte [2169] ¶ ffor which resoun þis noble prudence suffred hire housbond for to weepe and crye as for a certeyn space [2170] ¶ And when sche saugh hire tyme sche seyde him in þis wyse ¶ Allas my lord q*uod* sche why make ȝe ȝoure self' for to be ylike a fool [2171] ffor soþe it' ap*er*tyneþ nouȝt' to a wise man to maken such a sorwe [2172] ¶ ȝoure doughter wiþ þe grace [1]of god schal be warisshed and askape [2173] ¶ And all*e* were it' so þat' sche right' now were deed? ȝe oughte nouȝt' as for hire deþ ȝoure self' to destryue [2174] ¶ Senek' saiþ þe wiseman schal nouȝt' take to gret' discomfort' for þe deþ of' his children [2175] but' certes he schulde suffre it' in pacience as wel as he abydeþ þe deþ of' his owen p*ro*pre p*er*sone

[2176] ¶ This Melibeus answerde anon and sayde ¶ What' man q*uod* he schulde of' his wepyng' stynte þat' haþ so gret' a cause for to weepe [2177] ¶ Ih*esus* c*ris*t' oure lord himself' wepte for þe deþ of' lazarus his freend [2178] ¶ Prudens answerde ¶ certes wel I woot' a-tempre weepyng' is nouȝt' defendid vnto him þat' sorwful is among' folk' in sorwe ¶ But' it' is raþer y-g*ra*unted him to wepe [2179] ¶ The apostel Poule. vnto þe Romayns writeþ. Man schal reioyse wiþ hem þat' maken ioye ¶ And weepen wiþ suche folk' as wepen [2180] ¶ But þough a-tempre wepynge be y-g*ra*unted Outragous weepyng' certes is defended [2181] ¶ Mesurable wepyng' schulde be considered after þe lore þat' techeþ vs Senek ¶ Senek/
[2182] ¶ Whan þat' þi freend is deed let' nought' þin yen to moyste ben of' teeres ne to druye ¶ Al þough þe teeres comen of' þin eyen let' hem nouȝt' fallen [2183] ¶ And whan þou hast' forgon þi frende I rede þou do þy diligence to gete þe anoþ*er*. and þis is more wiser þan for to wepe for þyn freend þe which þat' þou hast' lore ¶ ffor þer-in is no boote [2184] ¶ And þerfore if' þou lust' gouerne þe by Sapience? putte awey sorwe of' ȝoure herte. [2185] ¶ Remembreþ ȝou þat' Ih*esus* Cyrak' / seiþ ¶ Ih*esus* Cyrak /

a man þat is Ioyous and glad in herte hit him conserueþ florisching in his age ¶ But soþly sorwful herte makeþ his bones dryue [2186] ¶ he saiþ eek þus
¶ Salomon ¶ þat sorwe in herte sleþ ful many a man [2187] Salamon. seiþ þat right as moughtes in þe schepes flees annoyeþ to þe cloþes and þe smale wormes of þe trees ¶ Right so anoyeþ sorwe to þe herte [2188] ¶ Wherfore we ouȝt as wel in þe deþ of oure children as in þe losse of oure good haue pacience

¶ Iob [2189] ¶ Remembreþ ȝow vpon þe pacient Iob. whan he hadde lost his children and his temperel substañce / In his body endured and suffred many a greuous temptacion ¶ ȝet sayde he þus [2190] ¶ Oure lord quod he haþ ȝoue it me ¶ Oure lord haþ byreft it me Right so as oure lord haþ wolde right so be it don. y-blessed be þe name of oure lord [2191] ¶ To þese afore þinges Melibeus answerde to his wyf dame Prudence / Alle þine wordes quod he ben soþe and þerto profitable ¶ But trewly myn herte is troubled wiþ þis sorwe so greuously þat I not what to done [2192] ¶ let calle quod Prudence þin trewe frendes alle and þin lynage whiche þat ben wise Telle hem þyn [caas] [1]and herkne what þay say in counseillynge and ȝou gouerneth þer after here
Salomon sentence [2193] Salomon saiþ werk alle þing by counseil and þou schalt neuer repente þe

[2194] ¶ Thenne by þe counseil of his wyf dame Prudence Melibeus let callen a gret congregacioñ of folk [2195] [. . . . . *no gap*] olde and ȝonge and some of his olde enemys reconsiled as by here semblañt in to his loue and in to his grace [2196] ¶ And þer-wiþ-al þer come somme of his olde neyghebours and þat deden him reuerence more for drede þan for loue as it happeþ ofte [2197] ¶ Ther comeþ also ful many subtile flaterers and wyse aduocatis lerned in þe lawe

[2198] And whan þis folk / togidre assembled were This Melibeus in sorwful wise schewed hem þis caas

[2199] ¶ And by þe manere of' þis speche he bar in his herte a cruel yre redy to don vengeaunce vpon his foos And sodeynly desired þat' þe werre schulde begynne [2200] ¶ But' naþeles ȝit' asked he here counseil vpon þis matere [2201] A Surgien by licence and assent' of' suche as were wyse vp ros vnto Melibeus and sayde as ȝe may heere

[2202] Sire q*uod* he as to vs surgiens aperteyneþ to eu*er*y wigh̄t' þe beste þat' we can were as we ben wiþholde ¶ And to oure paciences þat' we do no damages [2203] þ*er*fore it happeþ many tymes and ofte þat' when tuo men haue euerich wounded oþ*er* O same Surgien heleþ hem boþe [2204] ¶ Wherfore vnto oure art' it' nys nouȝt' p*er*tynent' to norische werre ne parties to supporte [2205] ¶ But' certes as to þe warisshyng' of' ȝour doughter be it' so þat' sche is p*er*ilously wounded: we schulde do so ententyfly busynes fro day to night' þat' wiþ þe grace of' god sche schal be sound and hool as sone as it' is possible [2206] ¶ All*e* men in þis same wyse answerden and þe Phisiciens. saue þat' þay sayden a fewe wordes more [2207] þat' righ̄t' as maladies ben heled by þe contraries Righ̄t' so schal men warissche werre by vengaunce [2208] his neyghebur*s* full*e* of' enuye his feynede freendes þat' semed reconsiled his flaterers [2209] maden sembla*un*t of' wepyng' enpeyred and engregged meche of' his matiere in preysynge gretly Melibeus of' might' of' power of' riches and of' frendes despysynge þe power of' his adu*er*saries [2210] and sayden outrely þat' he anon̄ schulde awreken him on his enemys and begynne werre

[2211] ¶ Vp ros þanne an aduoket' þat' was wys and sayde by leue and by counseil of' oþer*e* þat' were wyse ¶ And sayde [2212] lordynges the neede for þe which we ben̄ assembled in þis place is a ful heuy þing' and an heigh̄ matiere [2213] by cause of' þe wrong' and of' þe wikkednesse þat' haþ ben don and eeke by resoun̄ of' þe grete damage /

in tyme comynge ben possible to [1]falle for þis same cause [2214] and eek' by resoun Of' þe grete richesse and power of' þe parties boþe [2215] ¶ ffor þe whiche resouns it' were a gret' *per*ile for to erren in þis matiere // [2216] wherfore melibeus þis is oure sentence we counseile ȝou abouen all*e* þinges þat' right' anon þou do þi diligence in kepyng' of' þi *pro*pre *per*sone in suche a wyse þat þou ne wante none aspye ne wacche þi body for to saue [2217] ¶ And after þat' we counseile þat þou sette in þin hous suffisaunt' garnysoun ¶ So þat' þey may as wel þy body and þin hous defende [2218] ¶ But' certes for to meve werre ne sodeinly for to do vengeance ¶ We may nouȝt' deme in so litel tyme þat' it' were profitable [2219] wherfore we asken leysir and space to haue deliberacioñ in þis cas to deme [2220] for þe co*m*mune p*ro*uerbe saiþ þus. he. þat' sone demeþ sone schal repente [2221] ¶ And eek' men say þus þat' þilke Iuge is wys þat' sone vnderstandeþ a matiere and Iugeþ by leysyr [2222] ¶ ffor al be it' so þat' all*e* taryynge be anoyful ⁊ algates it' nys nouȝt' to reproue in ȝeuyng' of Iuggementz ne in vengaunce takynge whanne it' is suffisaunt' and resonable. [2223] and þat' schewed oure lord ih*esus* crist' by ensample ¶ ffor when þat' þe wo*m*man was taken in aduoutrye was brought' in his presens to knowe what' schal ben don with hire p*er*sone ¶ Al be it' so þat' he wiste wel himself' what' þat' he wolde answere ⁊ ȝit' ne wolde he nouȝt' answere sodeinly but' he wolde haue deliberacioñ and in þe grounde he wrot' twyes [2224] ¶ And by þis cause we axen deliberacioñ And we schullen þanne by þe g*ra*ce of' god counseile þe þing*e* þat' schal be profitable

[2225] ¶ Vp sterte þenne þe ȝonge folk' atones ⁊ and þe moste partye of' þat' company haue scorned þis olde wise ma*n* and bygonne to make noyse and sayden [2226] right' so ¶ as whiles þat' yren is hoot men schulden smyte ¶ Right' so men schulden wreken here wronges whiles

þay ben freissche and newe ¶ And with lowde voys þey cryden werre werre

[2227] vp ros þe on of þe olde wise and with his hande he made a contynaunce þat þey schulde halden hem stille and ȝiuen hem audience [2228] ¶ lordynges quod he þer is ful many a man þat crieþ werre werre þat wot ful litel what þat werre amounteþ [2229] ¶ werre at his bygynnyng haþ so gret an enteryng and so large ¶ That eu*er*y wight may entre when him likeþ. and lightly fynde werre [2230] ¶ But certes to what ende þat schal þer-of bifalle it nys nouȝt lightly to knowe [2231] ¶ whan þat werre is ones bygonne þer is ful many a childe vnborne of his moder þat schal sterue ȝong by cause of þilke werre Oþer elles lyue in sorwe and deye in wrecchednesse [2232] ¶ And þ*er*fore er þat eny werre be bygonne men mosten [1]han gret counseil and good deliberacioñ [2233] ¶ And when þis olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resoñ wel neiħ all*e* at ones bygonne for to ryse for to breken his tale / and beden him fuloften of his wordes for to abregge [2234] ¶ ffor soþly he þat preche þ to hem þat luste nought his wordes ne his s*er*moñ hem annoyeþ [2235] ¶ ffor Ih*esus* Cirak saiþ þat musyke in wepynge is annoyous þing þus moche is to sayn as moche annoyeþ to speke bifore folk to whiche his speche annoyeþ ⸗ as it is for to syngen byforn him þat wepeþ [2236] ¶ And when þis wise man saugħ þat him wantede audience ⸗ al schamfast he sette him doun aȝein. [2237] ffor Salomon seiþ. þer as þou mayst haue non audience ⸗ enforce þe nouȝt to speke [2238] ¶ I se wel q*uod* þis wyse man þat þe co*m*mune prouerbe is soþ þat good counseil wanteþ. whan it is most nede

¶ Ih*esus* Cirak /

¶ Salo*mon*

[2239] ¶ ȝit hadde þis Melibeus in his counseill*e* many folk þat priuely in his eere counseled him certein þing. and counseilled him þe contrary in general audience

[2240] ¶ When Melibeus hadde herd þat þe gretteste

party of' his counseil were acorded þat' he schulde make werre? anon he consentede to here counseilyng ¶ and fully affermed to here sentence [2241] ¶ Thanne dame Prudence whan þat' sche saugh how þat' hire housbonde schope him for to wreke him on his foes and to begynne werre ¶ Sche in ful humble wyse whan sche saugh hire tyme / seyde him in þise wordes [2242] ¶ My lord *quod* sche I ȝou beseche as hertely as I dar and can ¶ Ne haste ȝou nouȝt' to faste ¶ And afore alle guerdouns ȝif' me audience [2243] ¶ ffor Pieres Alphons. saiþ ¶ O who so doþ to þe good oþer harme haste þe nought' to quyten hit ¶ ffor in þis wise þy frend wole abyde and þin enemy schal þe lengere lyue in drede [2244] ¶ The prouerbe saiþ þat' he hasteþ him wel þat' wisly can abyde ¶ and in wicked haste is no profyte

[2245] ¶ This melybe answerde to his wijf' ¶ ¶ Prudence I purpose nought' *quod* he to werke by þy counseille for many causes and resons ¶ ffor certes euery wight' wolde halde me þenne a fool [2246] ¶ This is for to say ¶ If' I for þy counseillyng' wolde chaunge þinges þat' ben ordeynt' and affermed by so many wyse [2247] ¶ Secoundly I say þat' alle wommen ben þikke and none goode of' hem alle ffor of' a þousend men saiþ Salomon I fand a good man But' certes of alle wommen fond I neuer good womman [2248] ¶ And also certes if I gouerned me by þy counseil it' schulde seme þat' I hadde ȝoue to þe ouer me þe maystrie ¶ and god forbede þat' it' so were [2249] ¶ ffor Ihesus Cyrak' [1]saiþ. þat if' þin wijf' haue maistrie? sche is contrarious to hire housebonde [2250] ¶ and Salomon saiþ ¶ Neuer in þy lyf' to þy wyf' ne to þy childe ne to þy freende ne ȝiue no power ouer þi self' ¶ ffor bettre it' were þat' þin children asken of þy persone þinges þat hem needeþ ¶ þen þou [be] þi self' in þe handes of' þin children [2251] ¶ And also if' I wole wirche by þi counseylyng'? certes my counseille moste som tyme be secree til it' were tyme þat' it' moste be

knowe and þis ne may nought be doo [2252. For it is written, 'þe Iangelry of wo*m*men can huyde þinges þat þey wot nou3t' [2253] Furthermore, the philosopher saith, 'in wikked counseil, wo*m*men venquysshe þ men;' and for these reasons I ought not to make use of thy counsel. (*See Prudence's answers to Reasons* 4 *&* 5, *below.*)]

[2254] ¶ When dame Prudence ful debonerly and wiþ all*e* pacience hadde herde all*e* þat hire housbonde liked for to say: Then asked sche of him licence for to speke and sayde in þis wise [2255] ¶ My lord q*uod* sche. as to 3oure ferste resoun it may lightly ben answerde ¶ ffor I say þat it nys foly to chaunge counseill*e* when þe þing is chaunged Oþer elles when þe þing semeþ oþer weyes þenne it semeþ aforn [2256] ¶ And more ouer I say þay þat 3e haue sworn and behight to parfourme 3oure emprise [*et tu la laissoies a faire* (Le Ménagier de Paris, i. 193)] by iuste cause: men schulde nou3t seyn þ*er*fore þat 3e were a lyere ne forsworn [2257] ¶ ffor þe book seiþ þat þe wise man makeþ no lesynge when he torneþ his corage / to þe bettre [2258] ¶ And if it be so þat 3oure emprise be establissht and ordeyned by gret multitude of folk ¶ 3et þar þe nought acomplyse þilke ordynaunce but 3ou like [2259] ¶ ffor þe trouþe of þinges and for p*r*ofite ben raþer founde. in fewe folk þat ben wise / and full*e* of resoñ þen by gret multitude of folk þer eu*er*y man cryeþ and clatereþ when him likeþ ¶ soþly such multitude nys nought honeste [2260] and as to þe secounde resoñ wher as 3e sayn þat alle wo*m*men ben wikke: Saue 3oure g*rac*e ffor certes 3e despyseþ all*e* wo*m*men in þis wise. and he þat alle despiseþ all dispyseþ as seiþ þe book [2261] ¶ And Senek seiþ þat who so wole haue sapience. schal no man dispreyse ¶ But he schal gladly teche þe science þat he can wiþouten p*r*esumpsioun or pryde [2262] and suche þinges þat he nought ne can he schal nou3t be asshamed to lere him and to enquere of lasse

folk þan of himself [2263] ¶ And sire þat þer haþ ben ful many a good wo*m*man may lightly be proued [2264] ¶ certes sire oure lord ih*es*u crist nolde neuer han descendet to be borne of a wo*m*man if alle wo*m*men hadde be wicke [2265] ¶ And after þat for þe grete bounte þat is in wo*m*men oure lord Ih*esus* when he was rysen fro deþ to lyfe appered raþer to wo*m*man þan to his apostels [2266] ¶ and þoughh þat Salomon saiþ þat he ne fond neuer wo*m*man good it [1]folweþ noughht þerfore þat all*e* wo*m*men ben wikke [2267] ¶ For þoughh þat he ne fonde no good wo*m*man Certes many anoþ*er* man haþ founden many a wo*m*man ful good and trewe [2268] Or elles p*er*auenture þe entent of Salamo*n* was þus þat as in souereyn bounte he fande no wo*m*man [2269] This is to say þat þer nys no wighht þat haþ p*ar*fyt bounte saue god allone as he himself recordeþ in his eu*au*ngelist [2270] ¶ For þ*er* nys no creature so good that him ne wanteþ som what/ of þe p*er*feccioñ of god þat is his makere [2271] ¶ The þridde resoun is þis ȝe say þat if ȝe gou*er*ne ȝou by my counseil hit schulde seme þat ȝe hadde ȝoue me þe maystry And þe lordschip of ȝoure p*er*sone // [2272] Sire saue ȝoure g*ra*ce hit nys nought so ¶ For if so were þ*a*t no man schulde be counseled but oonly of hem þat hadde lorschipe and maystrye of his p*er*sone men nolde noughht be counseiled so ofte. [2273] For soþly þilke men þat askeþ counseil of a purpos ¶ ȝet haþ he free wille wheþer he wol do after þat counsel or no [2274] ¶ And as to ȝoure fourþe resoñ þer as ȝe sayn þat þe Iangelry of wo*m*men can huyde þinges þat þey wot nouȝt ¶ As who saiþ þat a wo*m*man can noughht huyde what sche wot [2275] ¶ Sire þese wordes ben vnderstonde of wo*m*men þ*a*t ben Iangleresses and wicked [2276] of whiche wo*m*men men sayn þat þre þinges dryueþ a man out of his hous. That is to say Smoke droppyng of Rayn and wickidde wyfes [2277] And

swiche wo*m*men saiþ Salamo*n* þat he were bettre to dwelle in desert þan with a wo*m*man þat is ryetous [2278] And sire by ȝoure leue þat am nought I [2279] ¶ For ȝe haue ful ofte assayed my grete Cilence and my grete pacience and eek how wel þat he can huyde and hele þinges þat men oughten secrely to huyden [2280] ¶ and soþ as to ȝoure fifte resoñ wher as ȝe say þat in wikked counseil wo*m*men venquysshe þ men ¶ God wot þilke resoñ stant heere in no stede [2281] ¶ For vnderstandeth now ȝe axeth counseil for to do wikkednes [2282] and if ȝe wolen werke wikkednesse and ȝoure wijf restreyneþ þilke wikked p*ur*pos and ou*er*come ȝou by resoñ and by good counseil? [2283] certes ȝour*e* wyf oughte raþer to be preysed þen to be blamed [2284] ¶ This scholde ȝe vnderstande þe philosophre þat saiþ In wicked counseil wo*m*men venquysshen here housebondes [2285] ¶ and þere as ȝe blamen all*e* wo*m*men & here resoñs? I schal schewe ȝou by many ensamples þat many wo*m*men han ben ful goode and ȝet ben and here counsel holsome and p*ro*fitable [2286] ¶ eeke some men han sayde þat þe counselyng of wo*m*men is eyþer to deere or elles to lytel of pris [2287] ¶ But al be it so þat ful [1] many wo*m*man is badde and here counseil vile & nouȝt worþ? ȝet han men founde many a good wo*m*man and ful discret and wys in counselyng // [2288] lo Iacob þurgh þe goode counseil of his moder Rebekka wan þe benysoñ of his fader and þe lordschipe ouer all*e* his breþeren. [2289] Iudith þurgh hire goode counseil delyuered þe Cite of Buphelye in which sche dwelte out of þe lande of Olyu*er*ne þat hadde it al byseged and wolde han al destruyet it [2290] ¶ Abegayle delyuered Nabal hir housbonde fro Dauid þe king þat wolde han slayn him and appaysede þe yre of þe king by hire witte and by hire goode counseilyng [2291] ¶¶ Ester by hire counceil enchaunced gretly þe poeple of god in þe Regne of Assueres þe king [2292] and þe same bounte. in good counseiling of

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many a wo*m*man may men telle [2293] ¶ And furþ*er*more whan þat oure lord had created Ad*a*m oure forme fader? he sayde in þis wise / [2294] It nys nought good to be a man allone ¶ Make we an helper semblable to himself. [2295] ¶ Here may ȝe see þat if þat wo*m*man were nouȝt good and hire counseil good and p*r*ofytable? [2296] Oure lord god of heuene ne wolde neuer han y-wrouȝt hem ne called hem þe helper of man [. . . . . *no gap.*] [2297] ¶ And þer sayde ones a clerk in tuo vers / what is bettre þan a good Iaspre [. . . . . *no gap.*] wisdom [2298] And what is bettre þan wisdam wo*m*man and what is bettre þan wo*m*man þat is a good wo*m*man no þing [2299] ¶ And sire by many of oþer resoñs may ȝe seen þat many wo*m*men ben goode and eek here cou*n*seil good and profitable [2300] ¶ And þerfore sire if ȝe wiln truste to my counseil? I schal restore ȝou ȝoure doughter hool and sound [2301] ¶ And eek þat I wol to ȝou don so moche þat ȝe schuln haue honour in þis caas

[2302] ¶ When melybe had herde þe wordes of his wijf Prudence? he sayde þus [2303] þat þe wordes of Salamon is soþ ¶ For he saiþ þat wordes þat ben' spoken discretly by ordynau*n*ce ben hony combes ffor þey ȝiuen swetnesse to þe soule and holsomnes to þe body [2304] ¶ And wyf by cause of þine swete wordes and eeke for I haue y-proued and sayd þin grete sapience and þin grete trouþe I wol gouerne me by þyn counseyl in all*e* þing

[2305] ¶ Now sire q*uod* dame Prudence and seþenes ȝe fouche sauf to be gouerned by my counseil? I wol enforme ȝou how þat ȝe schuln gouerne ȝoure self in chesyng of ȝoure counseilo*ur*s [2306] ¶ ȝe schuln first fourme all*e* ȝour*e* wekes mekely byseken to þe hihe god þat he wol ben ȝour counseilour [2307] And schapeþ ȝou to such entent þat he ȝiue ȝou counseil and confort as taughte Thobye [1] to his sone [2308] at all*e* tymes. thou schalt/ blesse

 [1 leaf 221, back]

god and preyen him to dresse / þine weyes. and loke also þat þine counseiles ben in him for euermore [2309] ¶ Seint Iame saiþ ¶ If any of 3ou haue neede of Sapience: aske it of god [2310] ¶ And afterward þenne schullen 3e take counsel in 3oure self and examyn wel 3oure owne þou3tes of swiche þing*es* as 3ou þenkeþ þat is best for 3oure profyt [2311] ¶ And þenne schulle 3e dryue fro 3oure hertes þinges þat ben contrarious to good counseil [2312] þat is to say. Ire. Coueytise. and hastynes.

[2313] ffirst he þat askeþ counseil of himself: certes he moste be wiþouten Ire [. . . . . [2314] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] and wraþþe in himself he weneþ alwey þat he may do þing þat he may not do [2315] ¶ And secoundly he þat is Irous and wroþ he [. . . . . [2316] *no gap in the MS.*] may nought wel counseill*e* [2317] ¶ The þridde is þis. þat he þat is Irous and wroþ as saiþ Senek ne may nought speke but blameful þinges [2318] And with þilke vicious wordes he stereþ oþer folk to anger and to Ire [2319] And eek sire 3e moste drede coueytise out of 3oure herte. [2320] ffor þe apostel seiþ þat coueytise is þe roote of alle harmes. [2321] And trusteth right wel þat a coueytous man ne can nought deme ne þenke but only to fulfille þe ende of his coueytise. [2322] and certes þat ne may neuer be acomplised. ffor euer þe more habundance þat he haþ of richesse: þe more he desireþ [2323] ¶ And sire 3e moste also driue out of 3o*ur* hertes hastynes [2324] ¶ For certes 3e may nou3t deme for þe beste a sodeyn þought þat falleþ in 3oure herte ¶ But 3e moste avise 3ou on hit ful ofte [2325] ¶ ffor as 3e haue herd here biforn þe comune p*ro*verbe is þis That he þat sone demeþ sone repenteþ //

[2326] Sire 3e ne be nou3t alwey in ylike disposicioñ [2327] ffor certes som þing þat some tyme semeþ to 3ou þat is good for to do. Anoþer tyme it semeþ to 3ou þe cont*ra*rie. [*A great bit is now omitted in Corpus.*]

[Laud MS 600, leaf 233]

[2328] [When ye han taken counseile in your self[1] And han demed bi good deliberacion siche þing as you semiþ best [2329] ¶ þanne rede I / you that ye kepe it secre / [2330] bewrie not your counseile to no persone. bot it so be. þat ye wene sikerli þat þurgh your bewrieng / your condicion shal be to you þe more profitable [2331] ¶ For Ihesus Sirac saiþ ¶ Neiþer to þi foo ne to þi frende. discouer not þi secre ne þi foli. [2332] for þai wol yeue you audience and loking and supportacioñ in þi presence and scorne in þi absence. [2333] ¶ Anoþer clerc saiþ þat scarsli shalt þou finde any persone þat mai kepe counseil secreli. [2334] ¶ The book saiþ while þou kepest þi counsail in þin hert þou kepist it in þi prison / [2335] and whan þou bewriest þi counsaile to any wight / he holdeþ þe in his snare./ [2336] And þerfore you is better hide your counsaile. in your hert / þan praien him to whom ye haue bewried your counseil þat he wol kepe it clos and stille. [2337] ¶ For Seneca saiþ if so be. þat þou ne maist not. þin owne counseile hide. How darst þou praien any oþer wight / þi counseil secreli to kepe. [2338] ¶ Bot naþeles if þou wene sicurli / þat þi bewriyng[1] of þi counsaile to a persone wol make þi condicion to stonde in a better plite. Then shalt þou tellen him þi counseil in þis wise [2339] ¶ First þou shalt make no semblant / where þe were leuer werre or pees. or þis. or þat. ne shew him not þi wille / and þin entent [2340] ¶ For trust wel þat comunli þise counseilours. ben flaterers And [2341] namely þe counseillours of grete lordes. [2342] for þei enforcen hem alwei. raþer to speke plesant wordes. enclynyng to þe lordes lust[1] þan wordes þat ben trewe. and profitable. [2343][1] ¶ And þerfore men sai þat þe riche man haþ selden good counsaile / bot he haue it of himself [2344] ¶ And aftir þat þou shalt considre þi frendes and þi enemyes ./ [2345] And as touching þi frendes. þou shalt con-

nota

[1 Laud MS, leaf 233, back]

sidre whiche of hem beth most faiþful and most [Laud MS 600]
wise. and eldest and most approued in cou*n*seilyng
[2346] and of hem shalt þou axe þi cou*n*saile as þe
caas requireth

[2347] ¶ I / sai þat first ye shul clepe to youre cou*n*-
saile / youre frendes þat ben trewe./ [2348] For Salamon
saiþ / for right as þe hert of a man delitiþ in sauo*ur*.
þat is soote / right so þe cou*n*saile of your trewe frendes /
yeueþ swetnes to þe soule [2349] ¶ He saiþ also þer
mai noþing be likned to þe trewe frende / [2350] ¶ For
certes gold ne siluer be not so moche worþ. as þe
good wille of a trewe frende / [2351] and eke he saiþ
þat a trewe frende. is a stronge defence / who þat
it findeþ. certis he findeþ a gret treso*ur*
[2352] ¶ þene shul ye eke considre / if þat youre
trewe frendes ben discrete and wise / for þe book
saiþ. axe þi counsaile alwai of hem þat ben wise.
[2353] And bi þis same resoun. shul ye clepe to youre
counsaile of youre frendes þat ben age. siche as haue
sai sightes and ben expert in mony þinges. and ben
approued in counseiling. [2354] for þe book saiþ
þat in olde men is þe sapience. and in longe time
þe prudence [2355] ¶ And tullius saiþ þat grete
þinges ben not aye accompleed bi strengþe ne bi
delyuernes of bodi. bot bi good counsail. bi auctorite
of p*er*sones and bi science. þe whiche þre þinges
ben not feble bi age./ bot certes þai enforcen to en-
cresen dai by dai. [2356] and þan shul ye kepe
þis for a gen*er*al rewle ¶ First shul ye clepe to youre
cou*n*saile a fewe of yo*ur* frendes þat ben especial
[2357] ¶ For Salamon saiþ mony frendes haue þou.
bot among a þousand chese þe on to be þi conseil-
lo*ur* / [2358] For al be it so þat þou first ne telle þi
counseil bot to a fewe. þou maist aftirward telle it to
moo folk / if it be nede. [2359] bot loke alwey þat þi
cou*n*seilours haue þi[l]k þre condicio*un*s. þat I / haue said

[Laud MS] before. þat is to sai þat þei be trewe and olde. and of wis exp*er*ience. [2360] ¶ And wirke not alwey in eu*er*y nede / bi on counseilo*ur* allone. For so*m*tyme behoueþ it be counseilid bi many. [2361] ¶ For Salamon saiþ. Saluacion of þinges is. where as þer ben many cou*n*selers.]

[Laud MS *extract ends*]

[Corpus MS, *on leaf* 221, *back*]

[2362] Now haue I tolde ȝou of¹ which folk¹ ȝe scholde be counseled NOw wol I teche ȝou which counseil ȝe owe to eschewe [2363] fferst¹ ȝe schuln eschewe þe counseilyng¹ of¹ fooles. Salomon saiþ take no counseil of¹ a fool ffor he wol co*u*nseile but¹ after his owne luste and his affectiōs [2364] ¶ The book/ saiþ þat¹ þe p*r*oprete of¹ a fool is þis ¶ he troweþ lightly harme of¹ euery wiȝht¹ and lightly troweþ a bounte in himself¹ [2365] ¶ Thou schalt¹ eke eschewe þe counseiling¹ of¹ all*e* flaterers whiche enforcen hem raþ*er* to preysen ȝoure p*er*sone by flaterye þan for to telle ȝou þe soþfastnesse of¹ þinges

[2366] ¶ Wherfore Tullius saiþ among¹ all*e* þe pestilence ¹þat ben in frendschipe þe grettest¹ is flaterie ¶ And þ*er*fore is it¹ more nede þat¹ þou eschewe and drede flaterers þan any oþer poeple / [2367] The book¹ saiþ þou schalt¹ raþer [drede and] fle fro þe swete wordes of¹ flaterynge & preysyng¹ þen fro þe egre wordes of¹ þy frend þat¹ saiþ þe þin soþes [2368] Salomon saiþ þat¹ þe wordes of¹ a flaterer is a snare to cacche Innocence [2369] ¶ he saiþ also. he þat¹ spekeþ to his frend wordes of¹ swetnes and of¹ plesañce: setteþ a nette biforn his feet¹ to cacche him [2370] ¶ And þerfore Tullius saiþ Enclyne nouȝt¹ þin eeres to flaterers Ne take no counseil of¹ wordes of¹ flaterie / [2371] and Catoñ saiþ ¶ Avise þe wel and eschewe þe wordes of¹ swetnes and of¹ plesaunce [2372] ¶ And eek¹ þou schalt¹ eschewe þe counsellyng¹ of¹ þine olde enemys þat¹ be reconsiled [2373] The book¹ saiþ þat¹ no wiȝht¹ retourneþ saufly in to þe

grace of his olde enemy [2374] ¶ And Isope saiþ ¶ Ne truste nouȝt to hem to whiche som tyme þou hast had werre / or enmyte ne telle hem nouȝt þi co*u*nseille [2375] ¶ And Senek telleþ þe cause why it may nought be saith he þat where long tyme fuyr haþ endured þat *þer* dwelleþ som tyme vapour of hete [2376] ¶ And þerfore saiþ Salamon in þin olde foo truste *þ*ou neu*er*e [2377] ffor sikerly þough þin enemy be reconsiled and makeþ þe chere of humilite and lowteþ to þe wiþ his heed ne truste him neu*er*e [2378] ffor certes he makeþ þilke feyned humilite more for his p*r*ofyt þan for eny humilite or for eny loue of þin p*er*sone by [. . . . . *no gap*] such feyned contynance The which victory he might haue by stryf or werre [2379] And Petre Alfouns saiþ. make no felaschipe wiþ þine olde enemyes: ffor if þou do hem bounte þey wollen p*er*uerten hit to wickednesse [2380] And eeke þou most eschewe þe counseilyng of hem þat ben þin seruañtz and beren the gret reu*er*ence ffor p*er*auenture þey seyn it more for drede þan for loue [2381] ¶ And *þer*fore saiþ a Philosophre in þis wise ¶ Ther nys no wight parfytly trewe to him þat he to sore dredeþ [2382] ¶ And Tullius saiþ ¶ Ther nys no wight so gret of eny emp*er*o*ur* þat longe may endure / but if he haue loue of þe poeple and drede [2383] ¶ Thow schalt eschewe also þe counseiling of folk þat ben drunkelewe for þey ne can no counselle huyde. [2384] Salamon saiþ þer nys no pryuyte þer as regneþ drunkenes [2385] ¶ ȝe schullen han also in suspecte to þe counseling of such folk as counseile ȝow a þing priuily and counseile ȝou a þing þat is cont*ra*rie openly · [2386] ffor Cassidory saiþ þat it is a maner sleighte to hyndre his enemy when [1]he scheweþ to don á þing openly and werkeþ priuily þe contrarie [2387] ¶ Thou schalt haue also in þin suspectè þe coñselyng*e* of wikked folk [. . . . . *no gap*] þat is alwey ful

of fraude [2388] and Dauid saiþ þat blisful is þe man þat haþ nought folwed þe co*u*nseling of schrewes [2389] ¶ Thow schalt also eschewe þe co*u*nseilling of ȝong folk ffor here counseilyng nys nought rype as Salomon saiþ

[2390] ¶ Now sire siþenes I haue schewed ȝou of which folk ȝe schuln take counsel and of which folk ȝe schuln folwe þe counsel / [2391] Now wol I teche ȝou how ȝe schuln examyn ȝoure counsel after the doctrine of Tullius [2392] in þe examynyng þenne of ȝoure counseilo*ur* ȝe schuln considere many þinges [2393] ¶ Alþer first þou schalt considere þilke þing þat þou p*ur*posest and vpon what þing þou wolt han counseH þat verray trouþe be sayde and conserued þis is to say telle trewly þin tale [2394] ¶ For he þat saiþ fals may [not] wel be counseiled in þat caas of which [he lyeth] [2395] ¶ And after þis þou schalt consideren þe þinges þat acorden to þat þou p*ur*posest for to be by þin counseilo*ur*s if resoñ acordeþ þ*er*to [2396] ¶ And eek if þi mighte may atteyne þ*er*to ¶ And if þe more part and þe bettre part of ȝoure counseilours acorden þ*er*to or no. [2397] þen schalt þou considere what þing schal folwe of here counseilinge. as hate pees werre grace profyt other damage and many oþer þinges [2398] And in all*e* þinges þou schalt chese þe beste and weyfe all*e* oþ*er* þinges [2399] ¶ Thenne schalt þou considere of what roote it is engendred þe matier of þin counseil and what fruyt it may conceyue and engendre [2400] þou schalt eek considre all*e* þese causes for þe whiche þey ben spronge [2401] ¶ and whan ȝe haue examyned ȝoure counseil as I haue sayde and which partie is þe bettre and more p*ro*fitable and hast aproued it by many wise folk and olde [2402] þanne schalt þou considere if þou mayst p*er*forme hit and make of hit a good ende [2403] ¶ For certes resoñ wol nouȝt þat any man schal begynne a þing but if he mighte p*er*forme hit as him owȝte [2404] ¶ Ne no wight schulde

taken vpon him so heuy a charge þat he mighte [not] bere it [2405] ¶ For þe prouerbe saiþ he þat to mochel enbraceþ distreyneþ litel [2406] ¶ And Catoñ saiþ ¶ Assay such þing as þou hast power to done leste þe charge oppresse þe to sore þat þe bihoueþ to weyue þing þat þou hast bygonne [2407] ¶ And if so be þat þou be in doute. wher þou maist performe a þing or non: chese raþer for to suffre þan for to bygynne [2408] ¶ And Pieres alphouns saith If þou hast mighť to don a þing of which þou most repente it is bettre [. . . . . [2409] . . . . . *no gap*] halde þi tunge [1]stille þan for to speke [2410] ¶ Then may I vnderstonde by strenger resouns þat if þou hast power to performe a werk of which þou schalt repente þe ¶ Thenne is it bettre þat þou suffre þan bygynne [2411] wel seyn þey þat defenden euery wighť to assaye a þing of which he is in doute wher he may performe it or non [2412] ¶ And after when ȝe haue examynd ȝoure coñseiH as I haue sayd biforn and knowe wel þat ȝe may performe ȝoure emprise: conferme it þenne sadly til it be at an ende

[2413] ¶ Now is it resoñ and tyme þat I schewe ȝou whenne and where-fore þat ȝe may chaunge ȝoure counselours wiþouten ȝoure reprofe [2414] ¶ Soþly man may chaunge his purpos and his counseiH if þe cause cesseth or whan a newe cause betydeþ [2415] ¶ For þe lawe seiþ vpon þinges þat newely betyden bihoueþ newe coñseiH [2416] ¶ And Senek saiþ ¶ If þin counseil come to þe eeres of þin enemys: chaunge þi coñseiH [2417] [*Après, l'en peut changier son conseil*] if so be þou fynde þat by errour or by ony oþer cause harme or damage may betyde [2418] ¶ Also of þin counsel be dishoneste oþer elles come of dishoneste cause: chaunge þin counsel [2419] ¶ For þe lawe saiþ/ þat alle bihestes þat ben dishoneste ne ben of no value.

[2420] and eek' if' so be þat' it be impossible oþer may nouȝt' gladly be performed oþer kepte

[2421] And take þis for a general reule / þat euery counsel þat' is enformed so strongly þat' it' may nought' be chaunged for no condicion þat' may betyde: I say þat' ilke coñsel is wicked.

[2422] ¶ Melibeus whan he hadde herd þe doctrine of' his wijf' dame prudence: he answerde in þis wyse. [2423] Dame quod he as ȝet' vnto þis tyme ȝe han wel taught' me as in generalle how I schal gouerne me and in þe chesyng' and in þe wiþholdyng' of my counseilours. [2424] But' now wolde I fayn þat' ȝe wolde condescende in special [2425] and telle me how þat' likeþ ȝou or how þat' semeþ ȝou by oure counseillours þat' we haue chose in þis present' neede

[2426] ¶ My lord quod sche I beseche ȝou in al humbles þat' ȝe wolde nought' wilfully reproeuen aȝein myn resoñs ne distempre ȝoure herte þough I speke þing' þat' ȝou displese [2427] ¶ ffor god woot' as in myn entent' I speke it' as for þe beste for ȝoure honour and for ȝour profyt' eeke [2428] ¶ And soþly I hope þat' ȝoure benignite wol take it' in pacience [2429] ¶ and trusteþ to me wel þat' ȝoure counsel in þis cas ne scholde nouȝt' as to speke proprely be called a counselynge but' a mocioun or a meuyng' of' folye [2430] In which counseil ȝe haue herde in many a sondry wise

[2431] ¶ ffirst' and forþward ȝe han herd in þe assemblyng' of' ȝour counsellours [2432] ¶ ffor first' ȝe schulde haue cleped [1]a fewe folk' to ȝoure counseille ¶ And after þat' ȝe might' haue schewed it' to mo folk' if' it' hadde be neede. [2433] But' certes sodeinly ȝe han cleped to ȝoure counseil a gret' multitude of' poeple fulle chargaunt' and ful annuyous for to heere [2434] ¶ And also ȝe haue herde furthere as ȝe schulde only haue cleped to ȝoure counselle ȝoure trewe frendes olde & wise [2435] ¶ ȝe han cleped also straunge folk' ȝong' folk' fals flaterers and enemys

reconsiled and folk' þat don ȝou reuerence wiþouten loue / [2436] and eek' also ȝe haue herd for ȝe han brought wiþ ȝou to ȝoure counseil. Ire. coueytise and hastines [2437] þe whiche þre þinges ben contrary to eu*er*y good counseil and honest' & profitable [2438] þe whiche þre þinges ȝe han nouȝt' anyntesched o*þer* destruyed hem ney*þer* in ȝoure self' ne in ȝoure / counceillours as ȝe aughte [2439] ¶ ȝe han herde also for ȝe han schewed to ȝoure counseillours ȝoure talent' ȝoure affeccioñ to make werre anon for to do vengeaunce [2440] And þey haue aspied by ȝoure wordes to what' þing' ȝe ben enclyned [2441] ¶ and þ*er*fore haue þey raþer counseled ȝou to ȝoure talent' þan to ȝoure p*r*ofyt' [2442] ȝe han herde also for semeþ it / sufficeþ to han ben counceled by þis counceillo*ur*s oonly and wiþ litel auyse [2443] where as in so grete and in so heih a neede it' haþ be necessarye mo counselo*ur*s and mo deliberacioñs to parforme ȝoure emprise [2444] ¶ ȝe han herd also for ȝe han herd nought' ȝoure counsel in þe forseyde manere ne in dewe man*er*e as þe cas requyreþ [2445] ¶ ȝe haue herd also for ȝe haue maad no dyuysioñ betwixe [. . . . . *no gap*] ȝoure trewe frendes and ȝoure feyned coñcelo*ur*s [2446] ¶ Ne ȝe haue nouȝt' knowe þe wille of' ȝoure trewe freendes olde and wise. [2447] but' ȝe haue cast' all*e* here wordes in an hoche potte and enclyned ȝoure herte to þe more part' and to þe grettere nombre [. . . . . [2448] . . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] of fooles þenne of' wise men. [2449] ¶ And þerfore þe counselynge þat' ben at congregacioñs and multitudes of' folk' þer as men take more reward to þe nombre þen to Sapience of p*er*sones? [2450] ȝe seen wel þat in suche councelynges fooles haue þe maystrie [2451] ¶ Melybe answerde and sayde aȝeiñ I g*ra*unte wel þat' I haue herd [2452] ¶ But' þer as þou hast' tolde me þer biforn þat' he nys nought' to blame þat chaungeþ his coun-

ceiloures for certein caas and for certein and iuste cause [2453] I am al redy to chaunge myne counceilours right as þou woldest deuyse [2454] ¶ ffor þe prouerbe saith þat for to don synne is mannysschē But certes for to perseueren longe in synne is werkes of þe deuel.

[2455] [1]To þis sentence answered anon dame Prudence and sayde. [2456] examyneþ quod sche ȝoure coñselle and let vs se þe which of hem haþ spoke more resonably and taught ȝou best coñseil [2457] ¶ And for as moche as þat examinacion is necessary. let vs begynne at surgiens and at phisiciens þat first spaken of þis matiere [2458] ¶ I say þat Phisiciens & surgiens haue sayd ȝou in ȝoure coñsel discretly as hem oughte [2459] & in here speche sethens ful wisly þat to þe office of hem apperteyneþ to don to euery wight honour and profyt and nouȝt for to ennoye [2460] and after here crafte to don gret diligence vnto þe cure of hem whiche þat þey haue in here gouernaunce [2461] and sir right as þey han answered wisly and discretly: [2462] Right so rede I þat þey ben heighly and souereynly guerdount for here noble speche [2463] and eek for þey schullen more do þe ententyf busynes in þe curacioñ of þin doughter deere [2464] ¶ ffor al be it so þat þei ben ȝoure freendes: þerfore schuln ȝe nouȝt suffre þat þey serue ȝou for nought [2465] ¶ But ȝe aughte þer after guerdoñ hem and payen hem here largesse [2466] ¶ and as touchynge þe proporcioñ which þat þe phisiciens encreseden in þis caas ¶ This is to sayn [2467] þat in maladyes is þat a contrary is warisshed by anoþer contrarie [2468] ¶ I wolde fayn knowe how ȝe vnderstode þilke text and what is ȝoure sentence [2469] ¶ Certes quod Mellibeus I vnderstande it in þis wise. [2470] Right as þey haue done me a contrary: so schuld I don hem anoþer [2471] ¶ ffor right as þey haue vengèd hem vpon me: and don me wrong: Right so wol I venge me vpon hem

and don hem wrong' [2472] and þenne haue I cured a contrary by anoþer

[2473] ¶ lo lo q*uod* dame prudence how lightly is eu*er*y man enclyned to his owne desir to his plesaunce [2474] ¶ Certes q*uod* sche þe wordes of' þe phisicien ne schulde nouȝt' be vnderstande in þat' wise [2475] ffor certes wikkednesse is nouȝt' cont*ra*ry to wickednes ne vengeance is nouȝt' contrary to vengaunce ne wrong' to wrong' [*mais sont semblables*. [2476] *Et pour ce, vengence par vengence, ne injure par injure, n'est pas curé* (Men. i. 206-7)] [2477] But' eu*er*y of' hem encreseþ and engreggeþ oþ*er* [2478] ¶ But' certes þe wordes of' þe phisicien schullen ben vnderstonde in þis wise [2479] ¶ ffor good and wicknesse ben tuo cont*ra*rious ¶ And pees and werre vengeañce and sufferañce discord and acord and many oþer þinges [2480] ¶ But' certes wickednesse schal ben y-warisched by goodnes. discord by acord. werre by pees and so forþ and oþer þinges [2481] ¶ And herto acordeþ seint' Poule þe appostel and in many place [2482] he saiþ ¶ Ne ȝeldeþ nouȝt' harm for [1] harm ne wicked speche [*pour mesdit*] [2483] But' do wel to hem þat' don þe harme and blesse hem þat' saiþ to þe harme [2484] And many oþer places he amonyssheþ pees and acord [2485] ¶ But' now wol I speke of' þe counseil which was y-ȝoue vnto ȝou by men of' lawe þe wise folk' and olde folk' [2486] þ*at*' sayden all*e* by on acorde as ȝe haue herde biforn [2487] ¶ That' ou*er* all*e* þinges ȝe schullen don ȝoure diligence to kepe ȝoure p*er*sone and to warmstore ȝoure hous [2488] ¶ And þay sayden also þat' in þis caas ȝe oughten to wirchen ful avisily and wiþ gret' deliberacioñ [2489] ¶ And s*ir* as to þe first poynt' þat' toucheþ vnto þe kepyng' of' ȝoure p*er*sone [2490] ȝe schullen vnd*er*stande þat' he þat' haþ werre schal euermore deuoutely and mekely preyen biforn all*e* þinges [2491] þat' Ih*esus* crist' of' his m*er*cy wole

haue him in his p*ro*teccioñ and ben his souerein helpynge at his neede [2492] ffor certes in þis world nys no wight þat may be counseled ne kepte sufficiauntly wiþouten þe kepyng of oure lord ih*esus* crist [2493] To þis sentence accordeþ þe p*ro*phete dauid þat saiþ. [2494] If god ne kepe þe cite in ydel wakeþ he þat it kepeþ [2495] ¶ Now s*ir* þenne schulle ȝe quyte þe kepyng of ȝoure p*er*sone to ȝoure trewe frendes þat ben ap*ro*ved and y-knowe [2496] and of hem schuln ȝe asken helpe ȝoure p*er*sone for to kepe ¶ ffor Catoñ saiþ ¶ If þou hast neede of helpe: aske it of þin frendes [2497] ffor þer nys non so good a phisicien as þin trewe freend [2498] and aft*er* þis þenne schulle ȝe kepe ȝou fro all*e* st*ra*unge folk and fro lyeres And haue alway in suspecte here companye [2499] ¶ ffor pieres alphouns saiþ ¶ Ne take no companye by þe way of st*ra*unge man but it so be þou haue knowe him of lengere tyme. [2500] and if so be þat he falle in to þin company p*er*-aduenture wiþouten þin assent [2501] enquere þenne as subtilly as þou canst of his conu*er*sacioñ and of his lyf byfore and feyne þy way seynge þou woldest go þider as þou woldest nouȝt go. [2502] and if he bereþ a spere holde þe on þe right syde of him. and if he bereþ a swerde holde þe on þe left syde of him. [2503] and þenne schul ȝe kepe ȝou wisly fro all*e* such manere of poeple as I haue sayde ȝou here bifore and hem and here coun-sel eschewe [2504] And after þis þenne schulle ȝe kepe ȝou in such man*er*e [2505] þat for any p*re*sumpcioun of ȝoure bodily strengþe þat ȝe ne dispise nought ne accounte nouȝt þe might of ȝoure adu*er*sary so lyte þat ȝe lete þe kepynge of ȝour*e* p*er*sone for ȝoure p*re*sumpcioñ [2506] ffor eu*er*y wysman dredeþ his enemy [2507] ¶ And Salamon saiþ wel fool is he þat of al haþ drede [2508] ¶ ffor [1] certes he þat þurgh hardynesse of his herte and þurgh þe hardynes of hi*m*self haþ so gret p*re*sumpcioñ him schal yuele betyde [2509] ¶ Thenne

schuln ȝe euermore encountrewayte enbusschementȝ and alle espyaile. [2510] ffor as saiþ þe wise man [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [2511] he ne falleþ in to no periles þat periles escheweþ [2512] ¶ And al be it/ so þat þou seme þat þou be in secre place ȝet schalt þou alwey don diligence in the kepynge of þin persone [2513] þis is to say. Ne be nouȝt necligent to kepe þin persone nought only fro þin grettest enemy. but only fro þin leste enemy [2514] Senek saiþ a man þat is wel auysed he dredeþ his leste enemy [2515] Ovide seiþ þat þe lytel wesel wol sle þe grete bole and þe wilde hert [2516] And þe prouerbe saiþ þat a luytel þorne may greeue a king ful sore ¶ And a litel hound wol holde þe wilde bore [2517] ¶ But naþeles I say nought þou schalt be so coward þat þou doute wher as is no drede [2518] ¶ The bok saiþ that some men haue gret lust to disceyue but ȝit þey drede to be desceyued [2519] [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] And kepe þe fro þe company of Scorners [2520] ¶ ffor þe book saiþ þat scorners ne makeþ no companye but flee here word as venym

[2521] ¶ Now as to þe secounde poynt where as ȝoure wise counceilours counseiled ȝou to warmstore ȝoure houses wiþ gret diligence [2522] ¶ I wolde fayn knowe how þat ȝe vnderstande þilke wordes and what is ȝoure sentence.

[2523] Mellibeus answerde and sayde Certes I vnderstande in þis wise þat I schal warmstore myn hous wiþ toures suche as haue castelles and oþer maner of edifices & armure and archers [2524] betwen which þing if I may my persone and myn hous so kepe and defende þat myn enemys schuln be in drede myn hous for to approche.

[2525] to þis sentence answerde anon prudence warnysshing quod sche of heihe toures and of heihe edifices appertyneþ somtyme to pryde [2526] And eek men make heihe toures [*et les grans édifices à grant travail et à grans*

despens, et quant elles sont faites, elles ne vallent riens se elles ne sont defendues par sages et par bons amis loyaux, et à grans missions (Le Ménagier, i. 209)] [2527] ¶ And vnderstande wel þat þe grettest and þe strengest garnysoñ þat riche man may haue / as wel to kepen his persone and his goodes is [2528] þat he [be] biloued
¶ Tullius wiþ his subiectes and with his neihebours [2529] ¶ ffor þus saiþ Tullius That *per* is a man*er* garnysoñ þat no man may venquysschen ne discomfite and *pat* is [2530] a lord to be loued of his citeȝeins and of his poeple

[2531] ¶ Now sire as to þe þridde poynt where as ȝoure olde and wise counseiloures sayden ¶ þat ȝou ne oughte nouȝt sodeinly ne hastely proceden in þis neede [2532] But þat ȝe oughten purueyen and apparayle ȝou in þis caas wiþ gret diligence and with gret deliberacioñ [2533] ¶ Trewely I trowe þat þay sayden right wisly
¶ Tullius. and right soþ [2534] ¶ ffor Tullius saiþ ·In eu*er*y neede er þou begynne it app*ar*ayle þe with gret diligence. [2535] þenne say I þat in vengaunce takyng in werre in [1] bataille and in warnestoringe [2536] er þou bygynne ¶ I rede þat þou apparayle þe þer to ¶ And do it wiþ gret deliberacioñ [2537] ¶ ffor
¶ Tullius. Tulli*us* saiþ. þat lange apparaylinge biforn þe bataile
¶ Cassidorus makeþ schort victory [2538] ¶ And Cassidorus saiþ þe garnysoñ is strenger whan it is long tyme avised

[2539] But now lete vs speke of þe counseil þat was acorded by oure neyheboures suche as don ȝou reuerence wiþouten loue [2540] ȝoure olde enemys reconsiled ¶ ȝoure flaterers [2541] þat counceleden ȝou certeyn þinges p*ri*uely and openly counseileden ȝou þe contrarie [2542] ¶ The ȝonge folk also þat counseiled ȝou to vengen ȝou and to maken werre anon. [2543] ¶ And certes sire as I haue sayde byforn ȝe haue gretly y-erred to han y-cleped suche maner of folk to ȝoure counsell*e* [2544] ¶ Whiche counseiloures / ben ynoughñ reproued by þe resoñs aforn sayde [2545] ¶ But naþeles let vs now descende to

þe special ȝe schuln ferst' proceden aft*er* þe doct*r*ine of' Tullius [2546] ¶ Certes the trouþe of' þis matier eyþer of' þis counseil nedeþ not' diligently enqueren [2547] ¶ ffor it' is wel wiste whiche þey ben þat' doon ȝou þis trespas & vilenye [2548] and how many trespasoures and in what' manere þey han don to ȝou al þis wronge and all*e* þis vilanye [2549] ¶ And after þis þanne schullen ȝe examine ȝe secounde condicion þe which þat' Tullius addeth in þis matiere [2550] ¶ ffor Tullius putteþ a þing' which þat' he clepeþ consentynge þis is to say [2551] who ben þay and whiche ben þay and how many þat' consenten to þin counseil in þin willefulnesse to don hasty vengeance [2552] ¶ And let' vs concidre also who ben þay and how many ben þay [. . . . . *no gap*] þat' consenten to ȝoure adu*er*saries [2553] And certes as to þe ferste poynt ¶ hit' is wel knowen whiche ben þay þat' consenten to oure hastyf' wilfulnesse [2554] ¶ ffor trewely alle þo þat' counselen ȝou to maken sodeyn werre ne ben nought' ȝoure frendes [2555] ¶ let' se now whiche ben þey þat' ȝe holden so gretly ȝoure frendes as to ȝoure p*er*sone [2556] ¶ ffor al be it' so þat' ȝe ben mighty and ryche: certes ȝe ben but' allone [2557] ¶ ffor certes ȝe ne han no childe but' a doughter [2558] ne ȝe han no breþ*er*en ne cosyns germayns ne non oþer neih kynrede [2559] ¶ Wherfore ȝoure enemys scholden stinte to plede wiþ ȝou ne to destruye ȝoure p*er*sone. [2560] ȝe knowen also þat' ȝoure richesse moot' ben dispended in diuerse p*ar*tyes [2561] & when þ*at'* eu*er*y wight' haþ his parte: þey woln take but' litel rewarde to vengen þy deþ [2562] ¶ But' þin enemys ben þre and þey haue many children breþ*er*en cosyns and oþer neyh kynrede [2563] ¶ And þough so were þat' þou haddest' slayn of' hem two oþer .iij. ȝet' dwellen þere ynowe to [1] awreken here deþ and to slen þin p*er*sone [2564] ¶ And þeih so be þat' ȝour*e* kynrede be more siker and stedefast' þen

þe kyn of ȝoure aduersary [2565] ¶ ȝet neuer þe les ȝoure kynrede is but after kynrede þey ben but litel sibbe to ȝou [2566] ¶ And þe kyn of ȝoure enemys ben neigh sibbe to hem ¶ And certes as in þat he condicion is bettre þen is ȝoures [2567] ¶ þenne let vs consideren also of þe counseilynge of hem þat counseleden ȝou to taken sodeyn vengeañce wheþer it acorde to reson or non. [2568] and certes ȝe knowen wel nay. [2569] ffor as by right and reson þer may no man take vengaunce of no wight ¶ But þe Iugge þat haþ Iurdixion of hit [2570] whan it is graunted him to take þilke vengeaunce hastely or attemperelly as þe lawe requyreþ [2571] ¶ And ȝet more ouer of þilke worde þat Tullius clepeþ consenting? [2572] þou schalt consente if þin mighte & þin power may consente and suffice to þin wilfulnesse and to þin counseiloures [2573] ¶ And certes þou mayst wel say þat nay [2574] ¶ ffor sikerly as for to speken proprely we may do no þing but oonly such þing as we may doon rightfully [2575] ¶ And certes rightfully ne may ȝe take no vengaunce as of ȝoure propre auctorie [2576] ¶ Then may ȝe seen þat ȝoure power ne consenteþ nouȝt ne acordeþ nouȝt with ȝour willefulnesse [2577] Now lete vs examine þe þridde poynt þat Tullius clepeþ consequent [2578] Thou schalt vnderstanden þat þe vengaunce þat þou purposest for to take is consequent [2579] And þerfore falleþ anoþer vengaunce. Peril. and werre and oþre damages without nombre of whiche we ben nouȝ warre as at þis tyme [2580] ¶ And as touchinge þe forþe poynt/. þat Tullius clepeþ engendrynge [2581] ¶ þou schalt considere þat þis wrang which þat is don to þe is engendred of þe hate of þin enemys [2582] and of þe vengeañce takynge ¶ And vpon þat wolde engendre anoþer vengeañce and mochel sorwe and wastyng of richesse as I sayde er

[2583] ¶ Now sir as touchinge to þe poynt þat Tullius clepeþ causes which þat is þe laste poynt [2584] ¶ Thou

schalt vnderstande þat þe wrong þat þou hast receyued haþ certein causes [2585] whiche þat clerkes clepen Oriens et Officiens and causa longinqua and causa p*r*opinq*ua* ¶ This is to sayn þe ferre cause [*et la prouchaine;* [2586] *la loingtaine est Dieu qui est cause de toutes causes* [2587] *la prouchaine est tes trois ennemis* (Le Mén. i. 212)] [2588] accidental was hate [2589] The causes material ben þe .v. woundes of þin douȝt*er* [2590] ¶ The cause formale is þe maner of here worchinge þat brouȝten laddres and clomben in at þine wyndowes / [2591] ¶ The cause final was for to slee þin douȝter it latted nought in as moche as in hem was [2592] ¶ But for to speken of þe ferre cause as [1]what ende þey schullen come Or what schal betyden of hem in þis caas ne can I nouȝt deeme . but by coniectyng and by supposynge [2593] ffor we schuln suppose [*qu'ils avendront*] to a wicked ende. [2594] by cause þe book of decrees saith ¶ Selden or wiþ gret peyne ben causes brouȝt to an ende when þey ben baldly bygonne

[2595] Now s*ir* if men asked me why þat ȝe suffren men to don ȝou þis vilenye Certes I can not wel answere as for no soþfastnes [2596] ffor þe appostel saiþ þat þe sciences and þe Iuggementz of oure lord god ben mighty and deepe [2597] ¶ Ther may no man co*mpre*hende ne serche hem sufficiently [2598] ¶ Naþeles by certeins p*re*sumpcioñs & coniectynges I halde and bileeue [2599] þat god þat is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse haþ suffred þis bytyde by iuste cause resonable

[2600] ¶ þin name is mellibe þis is to say a man þat drinkeþ hony [2601] ¶ Thou hast y-drunke so meche hony of þe swete temp*er*el richesses and delices & honures of þis world [2602] þat þou art drunken and hast forȝeten oure lord iħu crist þin creatour [2603] ¶ Thou hast nouȝt don to him such hono*ur* as þe oughte [2604] ¶ Ne þou hast nouȝt wel take heede to

þe wordes of Ovide þat saiþ [2605] vnder þe hony of þe goodes of þin body is hyd þe venym þat sleeþ þe soule [2606] ¶ And Salomon saiþ ¶ If þou hast founden hony ete of hit what sufficeþ [2607] ¶ ffor if þou ete of hit out of mesure / þou schalt spewe and be needy and pore [2608] ¶ And peraduenture crist hath þe in spite and haþ turned away fro þe his face and his eres of misericorde [2609] and also he haþ suffred þat þou hast ben y-punyssht/ in þe maner þat þou hast y-trespast [2610] ¶ Thow hast don synne aȝeins oure lord iħu crist [2611] ¶ ffor certes þe þre enemys of mankynde þat is to say þe fleissch. þe ffeend. and þe worlde [2612] ¶ þou hast suffred hem to entre in þin herte wilfully by þe wyndowes of þy body [2613] and hast nouȝt defended þe sufficeantly aȝeins here defautes and here temptacioñs So þat þay haue wounded þi soule in fyue place. [2614] ¶ this is to sayn þe deedly synnes þat ben entrede in to þin herte by þine .v. wittes [2615] And in þe same manere oure lord ihesu crist haþ and wolde and haþ suffred þat þine þre enemys ben entred in to þin hous by þe wyndowes [2616] and han wounded þine doughtres in þe forseyde manere

[2617] ¶ Certes quod Mellibe I se wel þat þat ȝe enforce ȝou mochel by wordes to ouercome me in such a manere þat I schal now vengen me of myn enemys [2618] Schewynge me þe periles and þe eueles þat mighten ffalle of þis vengeañce [2619] ¶ But who so wolde considere in alle vengañces [1] þe periles and eueles þat mighte sewe of vengañce takynge? [2620] a man wolde neuere take vengañce and þat were harme? [2621] ffor by þe vengaunce takynge ben þe wickede men disseuered fro þe goode men [2622] ¶ And þo þat han wille to don wicknesse restreynen here wickede purpos whan þey seen þe punysschyng and þe chastysing of trespasours

[2623] [And to this answered dame Prudence: 'Certes,' said she, 'I grant you that from vengeance come many

benefits as well as many evils: [2624] yet vengeance belongeth not to "a singuler persone," but only to the judges, and to those who have jurisdiction over evil-doers.'] [2625] ¶ And ȝit' say I more þat' right' as a singuler p*er*sone synneþ in takinge vengañce of' anoþ*er* man? [2626] Right' so synneþ þe Iugge if' he take no vengañce of he*m* þat' it' han desserued // [2627] ffor Senek' saiþ þus þat' mayster is good þat' reproeueþ schrewes [2628] ¶ And as Cassidory saiþ. A man dredeth to don outrages? whan he woot' and knoweþ þat' it' displeseþ þe Iuge and þe sou*er*aignes [2629] ¶ And anoþ*er* saiþ þe Iugge þat' dredeth do don rig̃ht' makeþ schrewes [2630] ¶ And seint' Poul þe appostel saiþ in his epistle whan he writeþ vnto þe Romayns that' þe Iuges beren nough̃t þe spere wiþouten cause. [2631] but' þay beren it to punysschen þe schrewes and þe mysdoers and for to defende þe goode men [2632] ¶ If' ȝe woln þenne take vengañce of' ȝoure enemys? ȝe schuln retourne or haue ȝoure recours to þe Iuge þat' haþ þe Iurdexioñ vpon him [2633] & he schal punyssche hem as þe lawe axeþ and requyreþ

[2634] ¶ A q*uod* Mellibe þis vengañce likeþ me noþing' [2635] ¶ I beþinke me now how fortune haþ norisched me fro my childhode and haþ holpen me to passe many a st*ra*unge pas [2636] ¶ Now wol I assayen here trowynge w*ith* goddes grace and helpe þat' sche schal helpe me my schame for to venge

[2637] ¶ Certes q*uod* Prudence if' ȝe woln worche by my counseille? ȝe schuln nouȝt assaye fortune by no way. [2638] Ne ȝe schuln nought' lene ne borwe vnto hire after þe word of' Senek' [2639] ffor þinge*s* þat' ben folily doon and þat' ben in hope of' ffortune schuln neue*re* come to a good ende [2640] ¶ and as þe same senek' seiþ ¶ The more clere and þe more schynynge þat' fortune is? þe more brutel and þe sonnere y-broke sche is [2641] ¶ trusteþ nouȝt' in hir*e* for sche nys noþing' stedefast' ne stable [2642] ffor when þou trowest' to be most' siker or seure of' hire

helpe? sche wol fayle þe and disceyue þe [2643] ¶ And wher as ȝe sayn þat fortune haþ norisshed ȝou fro ȝoure childhode [2644] I say ȝou þat in so mochel schuln ȝe þe lasse trusten in hire and in hire witte [2645] ¶ ffor Senek saiþ that what man is norisched by fortune? sche makeþ him to gret a fool [2646] ¶ Now þenne seþens ȝe desire and aske vengañce ¶ And þe vengañce þat is doon after þe lawe and biforn þe Iugge ne likeþ [1]ȝou nought [2647] and þe vengañce þat is don in hope of fortune is *per*ilous and vncerteyn [2648] ¶ Thenne haue ȝe non oþer remedye but for to haue ȝoure recours vnto þe sou*er*aign Iuge þat vengeþ all*e* vilanyes and wronges [2649] ¶ And he schal venge ȝou aft*er* *þat* þin self witnesseþ [. . . . .] [2650] leueþ þe vengañce to me and I schal don hit

[2651] ¶ Mellibe answerde ¶ If I ne venge me nouȝt of þe wrong þat men han doon to me [2652] ¶ I schal sompne or warne hem þat han don þis vilanye to me and all*e* oþre to don me anoþ*er* vilanye [2653] ¶ ffor it is writen ¶ If þou take no vengañce of an olde vilanye? þou sompnest þin aduersarie to don þe a newe vylanye [2654] [*Et ainsi, par souffrir l'en me feroit tant de villenies de toutes pars*] þat I mighte neyþer bere it ne sustene [2655] and so schulde I be ou*er*sette and halden ou*er* lowe [2656] ¶ ffor men sayn ¶ In mochil suffrynge schullen many þing*es* falle vnto þe whiche þou schalt not mowe suffre

[2657] ¶ Certes quod Prudence I g*ra*unte þat ouer mochil suffrañce / is nought good [2658] ¶ But ȝet ne folweþ it nouȝt þer-of þat eu*er*y p*er*sone to whom men don vilanye take of it vengañce [2659] ffor þat app*er*teneþ and longeþ al only to þe Iuges ffor þey schuln venge þe vilenyes and þe iniuries [2660] and þ*er*fore þo tuo auctoritees þat ȝe han sayde aboue ben oonly vnderstanden in þe Iuges [2661] ¶ ffor whan þey suffren ouer mochil þe wronges and vilanyes ben don

wiþouten punysschinge [2662] þay sompne nouȝt a man only for to do newe wronges but þay comaunden it [2663] ¶ Also a wise man saiþ þat þe Iuge þat correcteþ nouȝt þe synnere comaundeþ and biddeþ him to do synne [2664] ¶ And þe souerains and þe Iuges / mighten in here lande so mochel suffren of þe schrewes and mysdoers [2665] þat þey schulden by such suffraunce / by proces of tyme wexen of suche power and mighte þat þey schulde putte oute þe Iuges and þe souerainesne from here places [2666] and at þe laste maken hem leesen here lordschipes

[2667] ¶ But let vs now putte þat ȝe han leue to vengen ȝou [2668] ¶ If ȝe ben nouȝt of mighte and power as now to vengen ȝou [2669] ffor if ȝe woln maken comparisoñ vnto þe mighte of ȝoure aduersaries ¶ ȝe schullen fynden in many þinges þat I haue schewed ȝou ben þis þat here condicioñ is bettre þan ȝoures [2670] ¶ And *þer*fore say I þat it is good as now þat ȝe suffre and be pacient

[2671] ¶ fferþermore ȝe knowen þat after þe co*m*mune sawe it is a woodnesse a man to streyne[1] aȝeins a strenger or a more mighty man þen is himself [2672] ¶ And for to stryue wiþ a man of euene strengþe þat is to say [2] wiþ a strong man as he is it is p*er*il [2673] ¶ And for to stryue wiþ a waykare man it is folye. [2674] and *þer*fore schulde a man fle stryuyng/ as mochel as he mighte [2675] ¶ As Salomon saith ¶ It is a gret worschipe to kepyn him fro noyse and stryf [2676] ¶ And if it so bifalle or happe þat a man of grettere mighte and strengþe þan þou art do þe greuaunce [2677] study and busy þe raþer to stille þe same greuaunce þan for to venge þe [2678] ¶ ffor Senek saiþ þat he putteþ him in gret p*er*ile þat stryueþ wiþ a gretter man þan he is himself [2679] ¶ And Catoun saiþ if a man of heyer astate or degre or more mighty þen þou do þe annoye or greuañce Suffre hi*m* [2680] for he þat ones haþ greued þe

[1 (*margin*) stryue]

may anoþ*er* tyme releue þe and helpe þe [2681] ¶ ȝit sette I cas ȝe han boþe mightt and licence to vengen ȝou [2682] I say þat þer ben many þinges þat schuln restreynen ȝou of vengannce takinge [2683] and make ȝou for to encline and for to suffre and for to haue pacience in þe wronges þat han be don to ȝou [2684] ¶ ffirste and forþward if ȝe woln concider þe defautes þat ben in ȝoure owne p*er*sone [2685] for whiche defautes god haþ suffred ȝou to haue þis tribulacioñ as I haue sayde ȝou here byforn. [2686] ¶ ffor þe Poete saiþ þat we oughten paciently taken þe tribulacioñs þat comeþ / to vs when we þenken and consydren þat we han disserued to han hem [2687] ¶ And seint Gregory saiþ ¶ þat whan a man considereþ wel þe nombre of his defautes and of his synnes [2688] þe peynes and þe tribulacioñs þat he suffreþ semen þe lasse vnto him [2689] ¶ And in als mochel as him þenkeþ his synnes þe more heuy and greuous. [2690] ¶ In so moche semeþ his peyne þe lighter and þe esyer vnto him [2691] ¶ Also ȝe owen to encline and to bowen ȝour*e* herte to taken þe pacience of oure lord Ih*es*u crist as saiþ seint Petre in his Epistles [2692] ¶ Ih*es*u crist he saiþ haþ suffred for vs and ȝeuen ensample vnto eu*er*y man to folwe and to sewe him [2693] ffor he dede neu*er* synne ne neuere ne came a vileyns word out of his mouþ [2694] when men cursed him he cursed he*m* noughtt ¶ And when men beten him he manased hem noughtt [2695] ¶ Also þe grece pacience whiche seintes þ*at* ben in p*ar*adys. han had in tribulacioñs þat þey han suffred wiþoute*n* eny desert or gilte [2696] aughte mochel to stere ȝou to pacience [2697] [*Après, moult te doit encliner à patience*] [2698] considerynge þat þe tribulacioñs of þis worlde but litel while endureþ and soone passed ben and goon [2699] ¶ And þe Ioye þat man sekeþ to haue by pacience in tribulacioñ is p*er*durable / after þat þe

apostel saiþ in þe epistle [2700] ¶ The ioye of god he seiþ is *per*durable þat is to sayn [1] euer lastynge [2701] ¶ Also troweþ and belieueþ stedefastly þat he is nought wel ynorissht ne wel y-taught þat can nouȝt haue pacience [. . . . . *no gap*] [2702] ¶ ffor salamon saiþ þat þe doctrine of þe witte of man is knowen by pacience [2703] ¶ And in anoþ*er* place he saiþ ¶ he þat is pacient gou*er*neþ him by gret prudence [2704] ¶ And ȝet Salamon saiþ þe angry and þe wraþful man makeþ noyse ¶ And þe pacient man attemp*er*eth him and stilleþ him. [2705] he saiþ also ¶ It is more worþ to be pacient þen to be right strong [2706] And he þat may haue þe lordschipe of his owne herte is more to prayse þen he *þat* by his force and strengþe takeþ grete cites [2707] ¶ And þ*er*fore seiþ seint Iame in his Epistle þat pacience is a gret v*er*tu of p*er*fect*i*on

[2708] ¶ Certes q*uo*d Mellibe I g*ra*unte ȝou dame Prudence and pacience is a gret vertu of p*er*feccioñ [2709] ¶ But euery man may not haue þe p*er*fectioñ þat ȝe sechen [2710] ne I am nought of þe nombre of right p*ar*fyt men [2711] ¶ ffor myn herte may neuer ben in pees vnto þe tyme it be venged [2712] ¶ and al be it so þat it was gret p*er*il to my*n* enemys to don a vilanye in takinge vengaunce vpon me [2713] ¶ ȝet token þey non heede of þe p*er*ille ¶ But fulfilleden here wikkede wille and here corage. [2714] and þ*er*fore me þenkeþ þat men ouȝten not to reproue me þough I putte me in-to a litel p*er*il for to auenge me [2715] ¶ And þough I do a gret excesse þat is to say þough I do a vengañce outrage by anoþer

[2716] ¶ A q*uod* dame prudence ȝe seyn ȝoure wille and as ȝou likeþ [2717] ¶ But in no caas of þe world a man ne scholde nouȝt don outrage ne excesse for to vengen him [2718] ¶ ffor Cassidory saiþ þat as euel doþ he þat auengeþ him by outrage as he þat doþ þe

outrage [2719] and þerfore ȝe schullen vengen ȝou after þe ordre of right þat is to sayn by þe lawe and [nought] by excesse ne by outrage [2720] ¶ Also if ȝe woln vengen ȝou of þe outrage of ȝoure adu*er*saries in oþ*er* manere þenne right comaundeþ ȝe synnen [2721] ¶ Therfore saiþ Senek þat a man schal neuer vengen schrewedenesse [by schrewedenesse] // [2722] And if ȝe say þat right axeþ to defende violence by violence and fightynge by fyghtynge [2723] ¶ Certes ȝe say soþ when þe defens is don right anon wiþoute*n* interualle or wiþoute*n* taryenge or delay [2724] for to defenden him and nought for to vengen hi*m* [2725] ¶ And it bihoueþ þat a man putte such attemp*er*ańce in his defense [2726] þat men han no cause ne matier to reproeuen him þat defendeþ him of excesse and of outrage [. . . . . *no gap.*] [2727] ¶ Par de ȝe knowe wel þat ȝe make*n* non deffense / as now for to defende ȝou But for to venge ȝou [2728] and so seweþ it þat ȝe haue no wille to do ȝoure deede attemp*er*elly [2729] and þerfore me þenkiþ [1] þat pacience is good ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ þat he þat is nought pacient schal haue gret harme

[2730] ¶ Certes q*uod* Mellibe ¶ I g*ra*unte wel þat whan a man is vnpacient and wroþ of þat þat toucheþ him nouȝt and þat appertieneþ nought vnto him þough hit harme him it is no wonder [2731] ¶ ffor þe lawe saiþ þat he þat is coupable þat entermeteþ him or medeleþ him wiþ suche þing as app*er*teyneþ nouȝt vnto him [2732] ¶ And Salo*mo*n saith þat he þat entremeteþ him of þe noyse or þe stryf of anoþ*er* ma*n* is ylike to him þat takeþ an hound by þe eeres [2733] ¶ ffor right as he þ*a*t takeþ a st*ra*unge hounde by þe eeres is oþ*er*while y-byten wiþ þe hounde / [2734] Right in þe same wyse is þe resoñ þat he haue harme þat by his inpacience medleþ him of þe noyse of anoþ*er* man wher as it app*er*teyneþ nouȝt vnto him [2735] ¶ But ȝe knowen wel þat þis dede þat

is to sayn my grief and my*n* disese touche þ me right neigh [2736] and þ*er*fore þough I be wroþ and inpacient it is no m*er*uaylle [2737] ¶ And sauynge ȝoure grace I can nouȝt se þat it mighte gretly harme þough I toke vengañce [2738] ¶ ffor I am richer and more mighty þen my*n* enemys ben [2739] ¶ And wel knowe ȝe þat by monye and by hauyng grete possessiõs ben all*e* þe þinges of þis world gouernede [2740] ¶ And Salamo*n* saiþ. all*e* þinges obeyen to moneye

[2741] ¶ Whan Prudence hadde herd hire housbande to auaunten him of his richesse and of his moneye and dispreysinge of power and his adu*er*saries ¶ ¶ Sche spake and sayde on þis wise [2742] ¶ Cert*is* deere s*ir* I g*ra*unte ȝou þat ȝe ben riche and mighty [2743] ¶ And þat þe richesses ben goode to hem þat han wel y-geten hem and þat wel can vsen hem [2744] ¶ ffor right as þe body of man may nought lyue wiþoute þe soule ¶ No more may it lyue w*ith*outen temp*er*ele goodes [2745] and by richesse may a man geten him grace [2746] ¶ And þ*er*fore saiþ Pamphilles If eny gaddes dought*er* he saiþ be riche. Sche may cheese he saiþ of a þousand men [which she will for her husband [2747] and of the thousand] ¶ oon wol nought forsake*n* hire ne refusen hire [2748] ¶ And þis Pamphilles saith also ¶ If þou be riȝt happy ¶ þat is to say. If þou be right riche þou schalt fynden a gret nombre of felawes and frendes [2749] ¶ And if þin fortune chaungeþ þat is if þou wexe pore ? ffare wel frendschipe and felaschipe [2750] ¶ ffor þou schalt ben allone wiþoute*n* any companye but if it be þe companye of good folk [2751] ¶ And ȝit saiþ þis Pamphilles more ou*er* / þat þey þat ben þralle & bonde of linage schuln ben maad worþy and noble by þe richesses. [2752] ¶ And right so as by richesses þer comen many goodes ¶ Right so by pouert comeþ many harmes and eueles. [2753] ffor gret pouert con-

streigneþ [1]a man to don many eueles. [2754] And *þer*fore clepeþ Cassidor*e* Pouert'. þe mooder of' ruyne [2755] þat' is to say þe moder of ouerþrowing' or fallyng' doun [2756] ¶ And *þer*fore saith Pieres alphouns ¶ On of' þe grettest' adu*er*sary of' þis world is [2757] when a freo by kynde or of' birþe is constreigned by pouert' to eten þe almes of' his enemy [2758] ¶ And þe same saiþ Innocent' in oon of' his bookes. þat' sorwfull*e* and myshappy is þe condicioñ of' a pouere begger [2759] ¶ ffor if' he axe nought' his mete he deyeþ for hunger [2760] ¶ And if' he axe he deyeþ for schame ¶ And algates necessite constreigneþ him to axe [2761] ¶ And *þer*fore saiþ Salamon þat' bettre is to deye þan to haue such pouert' [2762] ¶ ȝet' saiþ Salamon þat' bettre is to deye of' bitter deþ þan for to lyue in suche wyse [2763] ¶ By þese resoñs *þat'* I haue sayde vnto ȝou and by many o*þer* resoñs þat' I kouþe say [2764] ¶ I graunte ȝou þat' richesse ben good to hem þat' geten hem wel and to hem *þat'* wel vsen þe richesses [2765] ¶ And *þer*fore wol I schewe ȝow how ȝe schuln haue ȝou [*en acquerant Richesses et en amassant icelles* (MS Reg. 19 C vii, leaf 140, back.)]

[2766] ¶ fferst' ȝe schuln geten hem wiþouten gret' desire by good leysir sokyngly and nouȝt' ou*er* hastily [2767] ¶ ffor a man *þat'* is to desyringe to gete richesse? abandoneþ him ferst' to þefte and to all*e* o*þer* eueles [2768] ¶ And *þer*fore saiþ Salamo*n* ¶ he þat' hasteþ him ouer busyly to waxe ryche schal ben non Innocent [2769] ¶ he saiþ also þat' þe richesse þat' hastely comeþ to a man ¶ sone and lightly goþ and passeþ fro a man [2770] ¶ But' þat' richesse þat' comeþ lytel and litel waxeþ alwey and multiplieþ [2771] And s*ir* ȝe schuln gete richesse ynough by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure t*ra*uayle vnto ȝoure p*ro*fyt/ [2772] and þat' wiþoute*n* wrang' or harme doynge to ony o*þ*er p*er*sone [2773] ¶ ffor þe lawe

saiþ þat' *þer* makeþ no man himself' ryche if' he do harm to anoþ*er* wigh̄t' [2774] [*car la loy dit que nul ne se face riche au dommage d'autruy* (Le Ménagier de Paris, tome i. page 222)] [2775] ¶ And Tulli*us* saiþ ¶ þat' no sorwe ne no drede of' deþ ne no þing' þat' may falle vnto man) [2776] is so mochil aȝeins nature ¶ as a man to encresce his owne p*ro*fyt' to þe harme of anoþ*er* man [2777] ¶ And þouȝ þe grete men and þe riche men geten richesse more lightly þen þou [2778] ȝet' schalt' þou nouȝt' ben ydel ne slowe to don þin p*ro*fyt ¶ ffor þou schalt' in all*e* wise flee ydelnesse [2779] ¶ ffor Salamon saiþ þat' ydelnesse techeþ man to don many eueles [2780] ¶ And eek' he saiþ þat' he þat' trauayleþ and busyeþ him to tylyen his lande schal eten breed [2781] but he þat' is ydel and casteþ him nought' to no busynesse ne occupacion̄ schal falle in-to pouert' and deye for hunger [2782] ¶ and he þat' is ydel & slowh̄ can neuer fynde couenable tyme for to doon his p*ro*fyte [2783] ffor [1] þer is a v*er*sifiour þat' saiþ þat' þe ydel man excuseþ hi*m* in wynter by cause of' þe grete colde ¶ And in somer by cause of' þe grete hete [2784] ¶ ffor þise causes saiþ Catoñ ¶ wakeþ and enclyneþ ȝou nough̄t' ou*er* mochil for to slepe ¶ ffor ou*er*moche reste norisheþ and causeþ many vices [2785] ¶ And þ*er*fore saiþ Seint' Ierom) ¶ Doþ some goode deedes þat' þe deuyl which is oure enemy ne fynde ȝou vnoccupied [2786] ¶ ffor þe deuel ne takeþ nouȝt' lightly vnto his worchinge suche as he fyndeþ y-occupyed in goode werkes

[2787] ¶ Thenne þus ¶ In getynge riches ȝe mosten flee ydelnesse [2788] ¶ and afterwarde ȝe schuln vse þe richesses þe whiche ȝe han geten by ȝoure witte and by ȝoure t*ra*uayle [2789] in suche a manere þat' men halden ȝou not' to scars ne to sparynge ne to fool large þat' is to say ou*er* large a spender [2790] ¶ ffor righ̄t' as men blamen an auerous man by cause of' his skarste and þinking' [2791] in þe same wyse is he to blame

þat spendeþ ouer largely [2792] ¶ And þ*er*fore saiþ Catoñ ¶ vse þine riches þat þow hast y-geten [2793] in such manere þat men han no matiere ne cause to clepe þe wrecche ne chynche [2794] ¶ ffor it is gret schame to a man to haue a pou*er*e herte and a riche purse [2795] ¶ he saiþ also þe goodes þat þou haste y-geten vse hem by mesure þat is to sayn spende mesurably [2796] ¶ ffor þey þat folily wasten and dispenden þe goodes þat þey han [2797] whan þay haue no more p*ro*pre of here owne: þey schapen hem to take þe goodes of anoþ*er* man [2798] ¶ I say þanne þat he schal flee auarice [2799] vsynge 3oure richesse in suche a man*er*e that men say not þat 3oure richesses ben y-buried [2800] but þat 3e han hem in 3oure mighť and in 3oure weldynge [2801] ffor a wise man reprouеþ þe auerous man and saiþ þus in tuo vers [2802] ¶ wherto and why buriеþ a man his goodes by his auarice and knoweþ wel þat needes moste he dye [2803] ¶ ffor deþ is þe ende of eu*er*y man as in þis p*re*sent lyf [2804] ¶ And for what cause or enchesoñ ioigneþ he him or knetteþ he hem so faste vnto his goodes [2805] þat alle his wittes mowen nou3t disseueren him or dep*ar*ten him fro his goodes. [2806] and knoweþ wel or owghte to knowe þat whan he is deed he schal nou3t bere out of þe world wiþ him [2807] ¶ and þ*er*fore saiþ seint Austyn þat þe auerous man is likned vnto helle [2808] ¶ þat þe more it chweþ þe more desir it haþ to swelwe and deuoure [2809] ¶ And as wel alle 3e wolde eschewe to ben y-cleped an auerous man or a chynche [2810] ¶ As wel schulde 3e gouerne 3ou and kepe 3ou in such a wyse þat men clepe 3ou nou3t to large [2811] ¶ þ*er*fore Tulli*us* [1]saiþ ¶ The goodes he saiþ of þin hous schulde not ben hydde ne kepte in cloos but þat þay mighte ben opened wiþ pitee and with debonairtee [2812] þat is to say to 3euen hem part þat han gret neede [2813]

¶ Ne þine goodes schullen not' ben so opene to ben eu*er*y mannes goodes [2814] ¶ afterward in getynge of' ȝour richesses ¶ And in vsynge hem ȝe schuln alway haue þre þinges in ȝoure herte [2815] [*c'est assavoir, Dieu, conscience, et bonne fame, et renommée*. [2816] *Tu dois doncques avoir Dieu en ton cuer* (Le Ménagier, i. 224)] [2817] ¶ And for no richesse ȝe schuln doon no þing' þat' may be displesaunce to god þat' is ȝoure creatour and ȝoure maker [2818] ¶ ffor after þe word of' Salamo*n* ¶ hit' is bettre to haue a luytel good wiþ þe loue of' god. [2819] þan to haue mochil good and tresour and lese þe loue of' his lord god [2820] ¶ And þe p*r*oph*e*te saiþ. þat' better it is to ben a good man and haue lytel good and tresour. [2821] þan to be halden a schrewe and to haue gret' richesse [2822] ¶ ȝet' say I · forþ*er*more þ*a*t' ȝe schuln don ȝoure busynesse to geten ȝou richesse [2823] So þat' ȝe geten hem wiþ good conscience [2824] ¶ And þe appostel saiþ þat' þer is no þing' in þis world of' which we schulden haue so gret' ioye: as when oure conscience bereþ vs good witnesse [2825] ¶ And þe wise man saiþ ¶ The substaunce of' a man is ful good when synne is nought in mannes co*n*science [2826] ¶ Aftirward in getyng' of' ȝoure Richesses and in vsynge of' hem: [2827] ȝe moste haue gret' busynesse and gret' diligence that' ȝoure goode name be alwey kepte and conserued [2828] ¶ ffor Salamo*n* saiþ ¶ þat' better it is and more auayleþ a man to haue good name þen to haue grete richesses [2829] ¶ And þ*er*fore he saiþ in anoþ*er* place ¶ Do gret' diligence saiþ Salamon in kepyng' of' þin frende and of' þin goode name [2830] ¶ ffor it schal lenger abyde with þe þan eny tresour be it' neuer so p*r*ecious [2831] ¶ And certes he schulde nouȝt' be cleped a gentil man þat' after god and good conscience alle þinges lefte þat' he ne doþ his busynesse ne diligence to kepen his good name [2832] ¶ And Cassidorie saiþ þat' it' is signe of' a good herte whan a man loueþ and desyreþ to haue a good name

[2833] ¶ And *þer*fore seiþ seint austyn þat *þer* ben tuo þinge*s* þat ben necessary and needfulle [2834] ¶ And þat is good consciens [2835] to þin owne p*er*sone inward and good loos ffor þin neyhebour outward [2836] ¶ And he þat trusteþ him so mechel in his goode conscience [2837] þat he displeseþ and setteþ it at nou3t his good name or loos and rekkeþ nou3t þat he kepeþ nou3t his good name nys but a cruel cherle

[2838] ¶ Sire now haue I schewed 3ow how 3e schuln doon in getynge of richesse and how 3e schuln vsen hem [2839] ¶ And I se wel þat for þe truste þat 3e han in richesse 3e wollen moeue bataile [1]and werre [2840] ¶ I counsele 3ou þat 3e begynne no werre in truste of 3oure richesses ¶ ffor þey sufficen nou3t werres to meyntene [2841] ¶ And *þer*fore saiþ a Philosophre ¶ That a man desireþ and wol algates han werre schal neuer haue sufficaunce [2842] ¶ ffor þe richere þat he is þe gretter despenses moot he make if he wole haue worschip*e* and victory [2843] ¶ And Salamon saith þat þe grettere richesse þat a man haþ þe more dispendoures he haþ [2844] ¶ And deere s*ir* al be it so þat for 3oure richesses 3e may han moche folk [2845] ¶ 3et byhoueþ it nought ne it is nou3t good to begynne werre wher as 3e may in oþer manere haue pees vnto 3oure worschip*e* and p*r*ofyt [2846] ¶ ffor þe victories of Batailles þat ben in þis world liþ nou3t in gret nombre of multitude of poeple ne in þe vertu of man: [2847] but it lith in þe wille and in þe hande of our lord ihesu crist // [2848] And *þer*fore Iudas Makabeus which was goddes knight [2849] when he schulde fighten a3eins his adu*er*saries þat hadde a gretter nombre & a gretter multitude of folk and streng*er* þen was þe poeple of Machabee [2850] ¶ 3et he recomforted his litel companye and sayde right in þis wise [2851] ¶ As lightly q*uod* he may our lord god almighty 3eue victory to fewe folk

as to many folk' [2852] ¶ ffor þe victory of' bataile comeþ nouȝt by gret' nombr*e* of' poeple: [2853] but' it' comeþ fro oure lord of' heuene // [2854] ¶ And deere sire for as mochil as þer is no man certein if' it' be worþy þat' god ȝeue him victory [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] or nouȝt'. after þat' Sal*o*mon seiþ [2855] ¶ þ*er*fore eu*er*y man schulde gretly drede werres to begynne [2856] ¶ And by cause þat' in batailles schuln fallen many p*er*iles [2857] ¶ And happeþ oþ*er*while þat' as sone is þe grete man slayn as þe litel man [2858] ¶ And as it' is writen in þe secoñde book' of' kynges ¶ The deedes of' batailles ben aduenturous and vncertein [2859] ffor as lightly as is oon y-hurt' wiþ a spere as anoþ*er*. [2860] and þerfore is gret' p*er*ile in werre ¶ Therfore schulde*n* men flee and eschewe werre in as mechel as a man may goodly [2861] ¶ ffor Salamo*n* saiþ ¶ he þ*at*' loueþ p*er*ill: schal falle in p*er*ille

[2862] ¶ After þat' dame prudence hadde spoken in þis man*er*e ¶ Mellibe answerde and sayde [2863] ¶ I se wel dame Prudence þat' by ȝoure faire wordes and by ȝoure resoñs þat' [*vous mettez avant, que*] þe werre lykeþ ȝou noþing' [2864] ¶ But' I haue not' ȝit' herde ȝoure wyse counsel how I schal do in þis neede.

[2865] Certes q*uod* sche I counseile ȝou þat' ȝe acorde wiþ ȝoure adu*er*saries and þat' ȝe haue pees wiþ hem [2866] ¶ ffor seint' Iame saiþ in his Epistles þat' by concord and pees þat' smale richesses waxen grete [2867] ¶ And by debat' and discord þe grete richesses fallen [1]doun [2868] ¶ And ȝe knowen þat' oon of' þe grettest' and most' sou*er*ayn þing' þat' is in þis world is vnite and pees [2869] ¶ And þ*er*fore sayde oure lord Ih*e*su c*r*ist' to his appostles in þis wyse [2870] ¶ Wel happy and blessed ben þay þat' louen and purchacen pees ffor þey ben cleped þe children of' god [2871] ¶ A q*uod* Mellibe now I se wel þat' ȝe louen nouȝt' my*n* hono*ur* ne my worschipe [2872] ¶ ȝe knowe wel þat' my*n*

aduersaries han bygonne þis debaat and brigge by here outrage [2873] ¶ And ȝe seen wel þat þey neuer queren ne preyen me nought of pees Ne þey asken me nouȝt to be reconsilede [2874] ¶ Wole ȝe þanne þat I go meke me and obeye me to hem . and crye hem mercy ⁝ [2875] ffor soþe þat were not my worschipe [2876] ¶ ffor right as men sayn þat ouer gret homlynesse[1] engendreþ despysyng So fareþ it by to gret humilite and mekenesse [1 corrected]

[2877] ¶ Then bygan dame prudence to make semblaunt of wrapþe and sayde [2878] ¶ Certez sire saue ȝour grace ¶ I loue ȝour honour and ȝour profyt as I do myn owne and euer haue doon [2879] ne ȝe ne noon oþer ne saugh neuer þe contrarye [2880] ¶ And ȝet if I hadde sayd ȝe schulde haue purchaced þe pees and þe reconsiliacion ⁝ I nad nought mochel mystaken me ne y-sayde amys [2881] ¶ ffor þe wise man saith . þe dissencion bygynneþ by anoþer man and þe reconsilynge begynneþ by þinself [2882] ¶ And þe prophete saiþ ¶ fflee schrewednesse and do goodnesse [2883] ¶ Seche pees and folwe it as mechil as in þe is / [2884] ¶ ȝet saiþ he nought ¶ ȝet schuln ȝe raþer pursewe to ȝour aduersaryes for pees þan þey schuln to ȝou [2885] ¶ ffor I knowe wel þat ȝe ben so harde y-herted þat ȝe wolen don no þing for me [2886] ¶ And Salamon saiþ ¶ þat he þat haþ euer an hard herte ⁝ atte laste he schal myshappe and mystryde

[2887] ¶ Whan Mellibe hadde herde dame Prudence make semblant of wrapþe ¶ he sayde in þis wyse [2888] ¶ Dame I pray ȝou þat ȝe ben nouȝt displesed of þinges þat I say ȝou [2889] ffor ȝe knowe wel þat I am angry and wroþ and þat is no wonder [2890] ¶ and þo þat ben wroþ witen not wel what þey doon ne what þay sayn [2891] ¶ Wherfore þe prophete saiþ þat / troubled eyen han no cleer sight [2892] ¶ But sitteþ and counseileþ me right as ȝow liste . ffor I am redy to doon right as ȝe woln desire [2893] ¶ And if ȝe reproeuen me of my folye ¶ I am þe more halden to loue ȝow and to preysen

ȝou [2894] ¶ ffor Salamo*n* saiþ ¶ he þat reprouеþ him þat dooþ folye: [2895] he schal fynden grettere g*rac*e þan he þat disceyueþ hi*m* by wordes

[2896] ¶ Then sayde dame Prudence ¶ I make no semblaunt of wraþþe / ne of anger but for ȝoure owne p*rof*yt [2897] ¶ ffor Salo*mo*n saiþ ¶ he is [1]more worþ þat reprouеþ or chideþ a fool for his folye schewing him semblañt of wraþþe: [2898] þan he þat supporteþ him / [. . . . *no gap*] in his mysdoynge & laugheþ at his folye [2899] ¶ And þis same Salomo*n* saiþ afterward þat by þe sorwful visage of man þat is to say by sory and heuy contynaunce of a man [2900] þe folk correcteþ and amendeþ him self

[2901] ¶ Than sayde Mellibe ¶ I schal nouȝt konne answere vnto so many resoñs as ȝe putteþ to me and scheweþ [2902] Sayeþ schortly ȝour wille and ȝoure counseil and I am al redy to fulfille and parforme

[2903] ¶ Thenne dame Prudence discouered al hire wille vnto him and sayde [2904] ¶ I counseile ȝou q*uod* he abouen all*e* þing þat ȝe maken pees betwixen god and ȝou [2905] and beþ reconsiled vnto him and vnto his g*rac*e [2906] ¶ ffor as I haue sayde ȝou here-byforn god haþ suffred ȝou to haue þis tribulacioñ and disese for ȝoure synnes [2907] and if ȝe doon as I say ȝou god wol sende ȝoure adu*er*saries vnto ȝou [2908] and maken ȝoure adu*er*saries fallen at ȝoure feet. redy to doon ȝour wille and ȝoure comaundeme*n*t [2909] ¶ ffor Salo*mo*n saiþ whan þe condicioñ of man is plesaunt and likinge vnto god // [2910] he chaungeþ þe hertes of mannes adu*er*saries and constreigneþ he*m* to besechen hi*m* of pees and of grace [2911] ¶ And I p*ray* ȝou let me speke wiþ ȝour adu*er*saries in priue place [2912] ¶ ffor þey schuln nouȝt knowe þat it be ȝoure wille or ȝoure assent [2913] and þenne whan I knowe here wille and here assent ¶ I may counsel ȝou þe more seurly

[2914] ¶ Dame q*uod* Mellibe doþ ȝoure wille and

ȝoure likynge [2915] ¶ ffor I putte me holly in ȝoure disposicioñ and ordinañce

[2916] ¶ Thenne dame Prudence whan sche saugh̄ þe goode wille of hire housbonde sche delyuered and took a-vys in hire self [2917] þenking how sche mighte bringe þis neede. vnto a good conclusioñ and to a good ende [2918] ¶ And whan sche saugh̄ hire tyme sche sente for þe aduersaries to come vnto hire in-to a priue place [2919] and schewed wysely vnto hem þe grete goodnesse þat comeþ of pees [2920] and þe grete harmes and periles þat ben in werre [2921] ¶ And sayde to hem in a goodly manere hou þat hem ¶ aughte to haue gret repentaunce [2922] of þe Iniury and wrong þat þey hadden doon to Mellibe hire lord and vnto hire and vnto hire doughter

[2923] ¶ And when þey herden þe goode wordes of dame Prudence. [2924] þey weren so supprised and rauysscht and hadden so gret ioye of hire þat wonder was to telle [2925] ¶ A lady quod þay ȝe han schewed vnto vs þe blessyng of swetnesse after þe sawe of dauid þe prophete [2926] ¶ ffor þe reconsilyng which we ne ben nouȝt worþy to haue in no manere [2927] ¶ But we oughten requiren hit wiþ gret contricioñ & [1]humilite [2928] ȝe of ȝoure grete goodnesse han presented vnto vs [2929] ¶ Now se we wel þat þe science and þe connynge of Salamon is ful trewe. [2930] ffor he saiþ þat swete wordes multiplyen and encrescen freendes and maken schrewes to be debonaire and meeke

[2931] ¶ Certes quod þay we putten oure dede and alle oure matiere and cause al holly in ȝoure goode wille [2932] and ben redy to obeye to þe speche of þe comaundement of my lord Mellibe [2933] ¶ And þerfore deere and benigne lady we preyen ȝou and besechen ȝou as mekely as we conne and mowen [2934] þat it like vnto ȝoure grete goodnesse to fulfille in dede ȝoure goode wordes [2935] ¶ ffor we considren and knowlechen

þat we han offended and y-greued my lord Mellibe out of resoñ and mesure [2936] so ferforþ þat we be nouȝt of power to maken him amendes [2937] ¶ And þ*er*fore we oblige vs and oure frendes for to don alle his wille and his comaundeme*n*t [2938] ¶ But p*er*auenture he haþ such heuynesse and such wraþþe to vs ward by cause of oure offense [2939] ¶ That woln enioygne vs such peyne þat we may not bere ne sustene [2940] ¶ And þ*er*fore noble lady we beseche to ȝoure wo*m*manly pite [2941] to taken such avisem*e*n*t*/ in þis neede þat we ne oure freendes ne ben nouȝt disherited þurgh oure folye

[2942] ¶ Certes q*uod* Prudence ¶ It is an hard þing and right p*er*ilous [2943] þat a man putte him al outrely in þe arbitracioñ and Iuggeme*n*t and in þe might & power of his enmys [2944] ¶ ffor Salamo*n* saiþ ¶ leeueþ me and ȝeueþ credence to þat þat I schal sayn ¶ I say yeuere peple and gou*er*nours of holy chirche [2945] to þin sone to þin wyf [*à ton frère*] and to þin freende [2946] [*ne donne puissance sur toy en toute ta vie* [2947] *Se il a doncques deffendu que l'en ne donne . . . à frère ne à ami* (Le Ménagier, i. 230)] þe might of his body [2948] ¶ By a strenger resoñ he defendeþ and forbedeþ a man to ȝiue himself vnto his enemy [2949] ¶ And naþeles I counseile ȝou þat ȝe mystruste nouȝt my lord [2950] ¶ ffor I wot wel and knowe wel þat he is debonaire and meke large & courteys [2951] and no þing desirous of good ne coueytous to haue richesse [2952] ¶ ffor þ*er* is no þing in þis world þat he desireþ saue worschipe and honour [2953] ¶ fforþ*er*more I knowe wel and I am right seur þat he schal noþing do in þis neede w*it*houten my counseil [2954] ¶ And I schal so worchen in þis cause by þe g*ra*ce of oure lord god þat ȝe schuln ben reconsiled vnto vs

[2955] ¶ þenne sayden þey wiþ oo voys ¶ Worschipful

lady we putten vs and oure goodes al fully in ȝoure wille and disposicioñ [2956] and [been] redy to come what [day] ȝou likeþ vnto ȝoure noblesse to lymyten vs or to assignen vs [2957] for to maken oure obligacioñ and bond as strong as it likeþ vnto ȝoure goodnesse [2958] þat we may fulfille þe wille of ȝou and of my lord Mellibe

[2959] ¶ Whan dame Prudence hadde herd þe answeres of þese men: sche bad hem gon ayayn pryuyly [2960] ¶ And sche [1] retourned aȝein to hire lord Mellybe and tolde him how sche fond his adu*er*saries ful repentaunt [2961] and knowlechinge ful reuerently and lowely here synnes and here trespaces and how þey weren redy to suffre all*e* peyne. [2962] requyrynge and p*rey*ng him of merey and pite

[2963] ¶ Thenne sayde Mellibe: he is wel worþy to haue p*ar*doñ and forȝeuenesse [*qui ne excuse point son péchié,* [2964] *mais le recongnoist et s'en repent et demande indulgence;* [2965] *car Sénèque dit là est rémission* (Le Ménagier, i. 231)] wher as co*n*fessioñ is [2966] ¶ ffor confessioñ is neighebor to Innocence [2967] ¶ And he saith in anoþer place ¶ he þat haþ schame for his synne and knowlecheþ it [. . . . . *no gap*] ¶ And þ*er*fore I assente and conferme to haue pees [2968] ¶ But it is good þat we do it nouȝt wiþouten þe assente and wille of oure freendes

[2969] ¶ Then was Prudence right glad and Ioyeful and sayde [2970] ¶ Certes sire q*uod* sche ¶ ȝe han goodly and wel answered [2971] ¶ ffor right as by counseil assent and helpynge of ȝoure frendes ȝe han ben styred to vengen ȝou and make werre: [2972] Right so wiþout*en* here counseil schulle ȝe nought acorde þough ȝe ne haue pees wiþ ȝoure aduersaries [2973] ¶ ffor þe lawe saith ¶ þer is no þing so good by way of kynde as þing to ben vnbounden by hy*m* þat it was y-bounde

[2974] ¶ And þenne dame Prudence wiþouten delay or taryinge sent anon messagers for hire kyn and for hire olde frendes whiche þat were trewe and wyse [2975]

¶ and tolde hem by ordre in þe presence of Mellybe al þe matiere as it is abouen exp*r*essed and declared [2976] ¶ and p*r*eyden hem þat þey wolden yeuen hire a wyse counseille ¶ what best were to doon in þis matiere [2977] ¶ And whan mellibeus counseil hadde taken here avys and good deliberac*i*on of þe forsayde matiere [2978] and hadden examyned it by gret busynesse and gret diligence [2979] þey ȝeuen ful counseil for to haue pees and reste [2980] And þat Mellibe schulde receyue hit with good herte of his aduersaries to forȝiuenes and mercy

[2981] ¶ And whan dame Prudence hadde herde þe assent of hire lord Mellibe and þe counseil of hire frendes [2982] acorded wiþ hire wille and entencioñ [2983] sche was wonderly glad in herte and sayde [2984] ¶ Ther is an olde prouerbe q*uod* sche saiþ þat þe goodnesse þat þu mayst do þis day do it [2985] and abyd it/ nought ne delay it nought til to morwe [2986] ¶ And þ*er*fore I counseile þat ȝe sende ȝoure messagers whiche þat ben discrete and wise [2987] vnto ȝoure adu*er*saries / tellynge hem in ȝoure bihalue [2988] if þey wolen trete of pees and acorde [2989] þat þey schapen hem wiþouten delay or taryynge comynge to vs [2990] ¶ which þing p*er*formed was in dede [2991] and whan þese trespasoures and repentynge folk of here folyes þat is to say þe aduersaries of Mellibe [2992] hadden herde what þese messangeres [1]sayden vnto hem; [2993] þey weren ful glad and ioyfull*e* and answerden ful mekely and benygnely [2994] ȝeldynge g*ra*ces and þankes to her*e* lord Mellibe and to all*e* his companye [2995] ¶ and schopen he*m* wiþouten delay to go wiþ þe messangeres and obeye to þe comaundement of here lord Mellibe

[2996] ¶ And right anon þey token here wey to Mellibe [2997] ¶ And toke þe so*m*me of here trewe wordes and frendes to maken feiþ for hem and for to ben here borwes [2998] ¶ And whanne þey comen to

þe *pre*sence of Mellibe ¶ he seyde hem þese wordes [2999] ¶ It stant þus q*uod* Mellibe and soþ it is þat ȝe [3000] causeles and wiþouten skile and resoñ [3001] han don grete Iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Dame Prudence and to my*n* doughter also [3002] ¶ ffor ȝe han entred in-to myn hous by vyolence [3003] and han doon suche outrage þat alle men knowen wel þat ȝe han disserued þe deþ [3004] ¶ And þe*r*fore wil I knowen and wyten of ȝou [3005] wheþer þat ȝe wollen putte þe punysschem*ent* and chastisyng and þe vengau*n*ce of þis outrage in þe wille of me and my wyf dame Prudence or ȝe woln nouȝt

[3006] ¶ Thenne þe wisest of hem þre answerde for hem alle and sayde [3007] s*ir* q*uod* he we knowen wel þat we ben vnworþy to come to ȝoure court of so gret a lord and of so worþy as ȝe ben [3008] ffor we han so gretly mystaken vs and han offended and agult in such a wise aȝeins ȝour heighe lordschip*e*. [3009] þat trewly we han deserued þe deth [3010] ¶ But ȝit for þe grete goodnesse and debonairte þat alle þe world witnesseþ of ȝoure p*er*sone [3011] ¶ we submitten vs to þe excellence and benignite of ȝoure g*ra*cious lordschipe [3012] and ben redy to obeye to alle ȝour comaundementz [3013] besechynge ȝou þat of ȝoure m*er*cyable pite. ȝe woln considre oure grete repentaunce and lowe submissioñ [3014] and to g*ra*unte vs forȝeuenesse of oure outragous trespas and offence [3015] ¶ ffor wel we knowe þat ȝoure liberalle grace & mercy strecche þ ferþer in-to good nesse þan don oure outrageous gultes and trespaces in-to wickednesse. [3016] al be hit. þat cursedly and dampnably we han gult aȝeins ȝoure heyhe lordschipe

[3017] ¶ Thenne Mellibe took him vp fro þe grounde ful benygnely [3018] and receyued here obligacioñs and here bandes by here oþes vppon here plegges and here borwes [3019] and assigned hem a certeyn day to retournen vnto his courtes [3020] ¶ ffor to accepte and receyue þe sentences and

þe Iuggementes þat Mellibe wolde comañde to ben don on hem by þe causes a-forn sayde / [3021] whiche þinges ordeyned ? euery man retournede [1] to his hous

[3022] ¶ And when þat dame Prudence saugh hire tyme sche f[r]eyned and axede hire lord mellibe [3023] what vengañce he þouȝt to take of his aduersaries

[3024] To which mellibe answerde and sayde ¶ Certez quod he I þenke and purpose fully [3025] to disherite hem of al þat þay han ¶ And for to putten hem in exile for euere

[3026] ¶ Certes quod Dame Prudence þis were a cruel sentence and mochel aȝeins resoñ [3027] ¶ ffor ȝe ben riche ynough and han no neede of oþer mennes good [3028] and ȝe mighte lightly geten ȝou a coueytous name [3029] which is a vicious þing and oughte [be] eschewed of euery man [3030] ¶ ffor after þe sawe of þe appostel Coueitise is roote of alle harmes [3031] ¶ And þerfore it were bettre to lese so mochel good of ȝoure owne þan for to take of here good in þis manere [3032] ¶ ffor better it is to leese good wiþ worschipe þenne it is good to wynne worschipe wiþ vilanye and schame [3033] ¶ And euery man oughte to don his busynesse and to geten him a good name [3034] ¶ and ȝet schal he nouȝt only kepen him in kepyng of his good name [3035] ¶ But he schal also enforcen him alwey to don som þing by which he may renouelle his good name [3036] ¶ ffor it is write þat þe olde goode loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed when it is nouȝt newed and renouelled [3037] ¶ And as touchinge þat ȝe sayn þat ȝe woln exile ȝoure aduersaries [3038] þat þenkeþ me mochil aȝeins resoñ and out of mesure [3039] ¶ Considereþ þe power þat ȝe han ȝouen ȝou vpon hemself [3040] and it is writen. þat he is worþy to lesen his priuilege þat misvseþ it ¶ The might and þe power þat is ȝouen him. [3041] And I sette caas þat ȝe might annoye hem þat peyne by right and by lawe [3042] which I

trowe ȝe may nouȝt do [3043] I say ne ne mighte nouȝt putte it to execucioñ peranenture [3044] and þenne were it likly to retorne to þe werre as it was byforn [3045] ¶ And þerfore if ȝe woln þat men do ȝou obeissañce ; ȝe moste deme more curteisly [3046] þis is to sayn ȝe moste ȝiue more esy sentences and Iugementz [3047] ¶ for it is writen þat he þat most courteisly comaundeth ; to him men most obeyen [3048] ¶ And þerfore I pray ȝou þat in þis necessite and in þis neede ; ȝe casten þerfore to ouercome ȝoure herte [3049] ¶ ffor Senek saiþ ¶ he þat oones ouercomeþ his herte ; ouercomeþ twyes [3050] ¶ And Tullius saiþ ¶ Ther is no þing so comendable in a gret lord [3051] as whan he is debonaire and meeke and appeseþ him meekely [3052] ¶ And I pray ȝou þat ȝe woln forbere now to do vengañce [3053] in such a manere. þat ȝoure goode name may be kepte and conserued [3054] and þat man may haue [1]cause and matiere to preyse ȝou of pite and of mercy [3055] and þat ȝe han no cause to repente ȝou of þing þat ȝe doon [3056] ¶ ffor Senek seiþ ; he ouercomeþ in euel manere þat repenteþ him of his victory [3057] ¶ Wherfore I pray ȝou let mercy be in ȝoure herte [3058] to þeffecte and þe entent þat god almighty haue mercy vpon ȝou in his laste Iuggement [3059] [*Car saint Jacques dit en son épistre : jugement*[2]] ¶ wiþouten mercy schal be to him þat haþ no mercy of anoþer wight

[2 Le Mén. i. 235]

[3060] ¶ Whan mellibe had herde þe grete skiles and resoñs of Dame Prudence and of hire wise informacioñs and techinges ; [3061] his herte gan enclyne to þe wille of his wyf consyderyng to þe trewe entent [3062] conformed him anon ¶ And assented fully to worchen after hire counseil. [3063] and þankeþ god of/ whom procedeth alle goodnesse þat him sente a wyf of so gret discrecioñ [3064] ¶ And when þe day came þat his aduersaries schulde apperen in his presence ; [3065] he spake

 [1 leaf 234, back]

to hem ful goodly and sayde to hem in þis wise/ [3066] ¶ Al be it so þat of ȝoure pruyde and by *pre*sumpcioñ and folye ¶ and of ȝoure necligence and vnku*nn*ynge [3067] ȝe han mysborn ȝou and trespassed to me /./ [3068] ȝet for as meche as I se and byholde ȝoure grete humilite [3069] and þat ȝe ben sory and repentaunt of ȝoure gultes ⁊ [3070] it constreigneth me to do ȝou g*rac*e and m*er*cy [3071] ¶ Wherfore I receyue ȝou vnto my grace/ [3072] and forȝiue ȝou outrely all*e* þe offenses Iniuries and wronges þat ȝe han doon aȝeins me and myne [3073] to þis effecte and to þis ende / þat god of his endeles mercy [3074] wol at þe tyme of oure deyinge forȝiuen oure gultes þat we han trespast vnto him in þis wrecchede world // [3075] ¶ ffor douteles if we ben sory and repentaunt of þe synnes and gultes þe whiche we han trespassed in þe sigħt of oure lord god ⁊ [3076] he is so fre and so mercyful [3077] þat he wol forȝiuen vs oure gultes [3078] and bryngen vs to þilke blisse þat neuer haþ ende. To which blisse he vs bringe That blood on crosse for vs gan springe *Qui cum patre* /

¶ Here endeþ Chaucers tale of Mellibe //

¶ *Prologus* Monachi
[*on leaf* 234, *back*]

Whan ended was þe tale of Mellibe
And of Prudence and hire benignite 3080
Oure hoost sayde as I am feyþful man
And By þe precious corpus Madryan
I hadde leuer þan a barel ale
That goode leef my wyf had herd þis tale 3084
ffor sche nys no þing of such pacience
As was þis Mellibeus wyf Prudence
By goddes bones whan I bete my knaues [leaf 235]
Sche bringeþ me þe grete clobbed stanes 3088
And cryeþ sle þe dogges eu*er*ychon
And breke boþe bak and bon
And if þat any neyghebour of myne
Wol nouȝt in chirche to my wif enclyne 3092
Or be so hardy to hire to trespace
Whan sche comeþ home sche rumpeth me þe face
and cryeþ false coward wreke þin wyf
By corpus bones I wol haue þy knyf 3096
And þou schalt haue my distaf and go spynne
ffro day to nigħt rigħt þus sche wol begynne
Allas sche saiþ þat euer I was y-schape
To wedde a melksop or a coward ape / 3100
That wil ben ouerled wiþ eu*er*y wight
Thou darst nouȝt stonde by þy wyf aright
This is my lyf but if þat I wolde figħt
And out at þe dore anon I mot me digħt 3104
Or elles I am lost but if þat I
Be like a wilde leoñ fool hardy
I wot wel sche wol do me slee som day
Som neihebore and þanne I go my way 3108
ffor I am p*er*ilous wiþ knyf on honde /
Al be it þat I dar hire nouȝt wiþstonde /

ffor sche is bigge in armes by my feiþ
That schal he fynde þat hire mysdoþ or seiþ 3112
But lat vs passe away fro þis matiere /
My lord sire monk he saiþ be mery of cheere /
ffor ye schul telle a tale trewely
Lo Rouchestre stant here faste by 3116
Ryd forþ myn owne lord brek nouȝt our game
But by my trouþe I knowe nouȝt ȝoure name /
Wheþer I schal calle ȝou my lord daun Iohñ
Or Daun Thom*a*s or elles Daun Alboñ 3120
Of what hous be ȝe by your fader kyn
I vowe to god þou hast a ful fayr skyn
It is a gentil pasture þer þou gost [leaf 235]
Thou art nouȝt like a penañt or a gost 3124
Vppon my feiþ þou art som officer
Som worþy Sexteyn or som Celerer
ffor by my fader soule as to my dome
Thou art a maister whan þou art at home 3128
No pouer cloysterer ne no pouer novys
But gouernour wyly and wys
And þer-with-al of brawnes and of bones
A wel faryng p*er*sone for þe nones 3132
I p*ra*y to god ȝiue him confusioñ
That first þe brought in to religioñ
Thou woldest haue ben a tredefoul aright
Haddest þou as gret leue as þou hast might 3136
To p*er*fourme al þy lust in engendure /
Thou haddest bygeten many a creature
Allas why werest þou so wyd a Cope
God ȝif me sorwe and I were a Pope 3140
Nouȝt oonly þou but eu*er*y mighty man
Though he were schore heyhe vpon his pan
Schulde haue a wyf for al þis world is lorn
Religioñ haþ take vp al þe corn 3144
Of tredyng and we borell*e* men ben schrimpes
Of feeble trees þer comeþ wrecched ympes

This makeþ þat oure heires ben so sclendre
And feble þat þay may not wel engendre 3148
This makeþ þat oure wyfes wol assay
Religious folk for þey may bettre pay
Of venus payement þen mowen we
God woot no lussheburghes paye ȝe 3152
But beþ nought wroþ my lord þough þat I play
fful ofte in game a soþ I haue herd say
This worþy monk took al in pacience
And sayde I wil do al my diligence 3156
As fer as sowneþ in to honeste
To telle ȝou a tale or tuo or þre
And if ȝou liste herkne hiderward [leaf 236]
I wol ȝou seyn þe lyf of seint Edward 3160
Or elles tregedys first wol I telle
Of whiche I haue an hundred in my selle
Tregedye is for to telle a certein storye
As olde bookes maken memorie 3164
Of hem þat stood in gret p*rosper*ite
And is y-falle out of heigh degre
In-to miserie and endeþ wrecchedly
And þey ben vercefyed comenly 3168
Of sixe foote whiche þat men clepen examytron
In proce eek ben endited many oon
And eek in metre in many a sondry wyse
Lo þis aughte ȝou ynough suffyse 3172
Now herkneþ if ȝou liste for to heere
But first I ȝou beseche in þis mateere /
þough I by ordre telle nouȝt þese þinges
Be it of Popes Emp*erour*s or Kynges 3176
And after here ages as me*n* writen fynde
But telle hem some bifore some behinde
As it comeþ now to my rememb*ra*nce
Haueþ me excused of myn ignorance ¶ Explic*it*
p*r*olog*us* mo*na*chi

¶ Here telleþ þe monk' // De casib*us* viror*um* illustriu*m*
¶ C^m^ xxj^m^

[*No breaks between the stanzas in the MS.*]

I Wol bewayle in maner of' Tregedye
The harme of' hem þat' standeþ[1] in heih degre [[1] stoden, *later, in the margin*]
And fellen so þat' þer nas no remedye
To bringen hem out' of' here aduersite 3184
ffor certein when þat' fortune lust' to fle
Ther may no man of' hire þe cours wiþholde /
[[2]Lat nonis truste on blyn[d] p*ros*p*er*ite[2]] [[2]—[2] *later, in margin*]
Beþ war by þis ensamples ȝong' and olde 3188

[*Lucifer.*]

At' lucifer þough he an aungel were ¶ P*ri*mo de lucifero
And nought a man at' him I wol begynne
ffor þeigh fortune may non aungel dere
ffrom heih degre ȝet' felle he for his synne 3192
Doun in-to helle wher as he ȝet' is Inne
O lucifer brightest' of aungeles alle
Now art' þou Sathanas þat mayst not' twynne [leaf 236, back]
Out' of' miserie which þou art' y-falle 3196

De Ad*a*mo [*in margin.*]

[LO Adam in the felde of/ Damascene. [Harl. MS 1758, *leaf* 184]
With goddis/ owne finger/ wroght/ was/ he.
And not bi getyng/ of/ mannes/ sperme vnclene.
And welte all Paradis/ sauyng/ oo tre. 3200
Had neuyr/ worldly man so hye degree.
As/ Adam had till he for his/ gouernaunce.
Was/ dryuen out/ of/ his/ hye prosp*er*ite.
To labour/ an to helle & to myschaunce.] [Harl. *extract ends*]

[*Sampson.*]

¶ Lo Sampson which was annu*n*ciate
By þangel long' er his natiuite /
And was to god almiglity consecrate
And stood in nobles whiles he mighte se 3208
Was neuer such anoþer as was he
To speke of' strengþe and þ*er*to hardynes
But' to his wyues tolde he his secre
Thurgh which he slough himself' þurgh wrecchednes 3212

¶ Sampson þis noble and mighty champion
Wiþouten wepen sauf' his handes tweye
he slough and al to-rente þe leoun
Toward his weddyng' walkyng' by þe weye 3216
his false wyf' couþe him so plese and preye /
Til sche his counseil knewe and sche vntrewe
Vnto his foos his counseil gan bewreye
And him forsok' and took' anoþer newe 3220

¶ An hundred foxes tok' Sampson for Ire
And all*e* here tayles he togyder bond
And sette þe foxes tayles all*e* on fuyre
ffor he in eu*er*y tail haþ putt' a brond 3224
And þey brent' all*e* þe cornes in þat' lond
And eek' here Olyues and here vynes eeke
A þousend men eek' he slough wiþ his hond
And hadde no wepne but' an asse cheeke 3228

¶ Whan þey were slayn so þursted him þat' he
Was wel neigh lorn for which he gan to preye
That' god wolde of' his peyne haue som pite [leaf 237]
And sende him drinke or elles most' he deye / 3232
And of' þis asse cheeke þat' was so druye
Out' of' a wang' tooþ sprang' anon a welle
Of' which he drank' ynough schortly to seye
Thus hilpe him god as Iudici*um* can telle 3236

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¶ By verray force at Gasan on a night
Maugre philistiens of þat Cite
The gates of þe toun he haþ vp plight
And on his bakke y-karyed hem haþ he 3240
heighe on an hille where as men mighte se
O noble almighty Sampsoñ leef and deere
That strong and noble haþ be /
In alle þis world ne hadde þer ben þy peere 3244

¶ This Sampsoñ neuer cyder drank ne wyn
Ne on his heed came Rasour non ne scheere
By precepte of þe messanger deuyn
ffor alle his strengþe was in his here 3248
And fully twenty ȝeer by ȝere
he hadde of Israel þe gouernañce
But after soone schal he wepe many a teere
ffor wommen schuln bringe him to meschañce 3252

¶ Vnto his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heeres alle his strengþe lay
And falsly to his fomen sche him solde
And slepyng vpon hire barme vpan a day 3256
Sche made to clippe or schere his here away
And made his foomen alle his crafte aspyen
And whan þat þay him fond in such aray
They bonde him faste and putte out his eyen 3260

¶ But er his heer was y-clipped or y-schaue
Ther was no bond þat might him bynde
But now is he in prisoun putte in a Caue
Where as þey made him at þe querne grynde 3264
O noble Sampson strengest of mankynde
O whilom Iugge in glorie and in richesse
Now maystow wepe with þin eyen blynde [leaf 237, back]
Seþenes þou art fro wele falle in to wrecchidnesse 3268

¶ The ende of þis Caytiffe was as I schal seye
his foomen made a feste vp-on a day
And made him as here fool biforn hem pleye
And þis was [in] a temple of gret aray 3272
But at þe laste he made a foul affray
ffor he tuo postes schook and made hem falle /
And doun fel temple and al þer it lay
And slough̄ himself and eek his foomen alle 3276

¶ This is to say þe princes euerichon
And eek a þousand bodyes were þey slayn
Wiþ fallyng of þe grete temple of stoon
Of Sampson ne wol I no more sayn 3280
Beþ war of þis ensample olde and playn
That noman telle here counseil to here wyues
Of such þing as þay wolde haue secre fayn
If þat it touche here lymes or here lyues 3284

[*Hercules.*]

¶ Of Ercule þe soueraign conquerour ¶ De Ercule
Syngen his werkes lewede and heih renoun
ffor in his tyme of strengþe he bar þe flour
he slough̄ and rafte þe skyn fro þe leoun 3288
he of sent arwes leyde þe boost a doun
he arpyes slough̄ þe cruel briddes felle
he golden apples rafte þe dragoun
he drough̄ out Serberois þe hound of helle 3292

¶ He slough̄ þe cruel tyraunt Buserus
And made his hors to frete him fleissh̄ and boon
He slough̄ þe verray serpent venymous
Of Achilles tuo hornes brark he oon 3296
And he slough̄ Cacus in a Cave of ston
He slough̄ þe geaunt Anteus þe stronge /
He slough̄ þe grisly boor and þat anoon
And bar þe heed vpon his necke longe 3300

¶ Was neuer wigħt sipen þe world bygan
þat slough so many monstres as dede he
Thurgħ out þis wilde world his name ran [leaf 238]
What for his strengþe and for his bounte 3304
And euery Reeme went he for to see
He was so strong þat no man mighť him lette
And boþe þe worldes ende saith trophe /
In stede of bo*u*ndes he a piler sette 3308

¶ A le*m*man hadde þis noble Campioñ
That hight Deianyre freissh as may
And as þe clerkes maden mencioñ
Sche haþ him sent a scherte freisch and gay 3312
Allas þis scherte and weylaway
Enuenymed was subtily wiþ alle
That or þat he had wered it half a day
It made his boones fro his fleissch to falle / 3316

¶ But naþeles some clerk*es* hire exusen
By oon þat hight Nessus þat it maked
Be as be may I wol hire nought accusen
But on his bakke þe scherte he weres al naked 3320
Tille þat his fleissħ was fro þe venym blaked
And whan he saugħ non oþer remedye
In hote coles he haþ himself y-raked
ffor wiþ no venym deyned he to dye 3324

¶ Thus starf þis worþy mighty hercules
Lo who may truste on fortune ony þrowe
ffor him þat folweþ all*e* þis world of prees
Er he be war is ofte y-leyd ful lowe 3328
fful wys is he þat himself can knowe
Beþ war for when þat fortune lust to glose /
Than wayteþ sche hire man doun to þrowe
By such a way as he wolde lest suppose // 3332

[*Nebuchadnezzar.*]

¶ The mighty trone þe precious tresor ¶ De Rege Nabugodonosore
The glorious septir and realle mageste
That hadde þe king Nabugodonosor
Wiþ tunge vnneþe may discryued be 3336
he twyes nam Iher*usal*em þe cite /
The vessel of þe temple he wiþ him ladde
¶ At Babiloyne was his souerain see / [leaf 238, back]
In which his glorie and his delit he hadde / 3340

The fayrest children of þe blood royalle
Of Ier*usal*em he dede do gylde anon
And maked eche of hem to ben his þralle
Among alle oþer Daniel was oon 3344
That was þe wisest childe of eu*er*ychon
ffor he þe dremes of þe king expowned
Wher as in Caldey clerk was þer non
That wiste to what fyn his dremes sowned 3348

¶ This proude king leet make a statue of golde
Sixty cubites longe and seuen in brede
To which Image boþe ȝonge and olde
Comaunded he to lowte and haue in drede / 3352
Or in a fourneys ful of fla*m*mes rede
He schal be brent þat wolde nought obeye
But neuere wolde assente to þat dede
Danyel ne his ȝonge felawes tweye 3356

¶ This king of kynges proude and elat
he wende god þat sitte in mageste
Ne might him nought byreue of his estate
But sodeinly he lost his dignite 3360
And like a beeste him seemed for to be
And ete hey as an oxe and lay þer oute
In reyn wiþ wilde bestes walked he
Til a certein tyme was come aboute 3364

¶ And ylike an Egles feþeres were his heres
And nayles like briddes clawes were /
God releeued him at certeyn ȝeeres
And ȝaf him witte and þanne wiþ many a tere 3368
he þankede god and euer his lyf in feere
Was he to don amys or more trespas
And or þat y-leyd was on his beere
he knew wel þat god was ful of might and *grace* 3372

[*Belshazzar.*]

¶ his sone which þat hightе Baltyzar ¶ De Baltazar *dicti Regis* Nabugodonosor filio
þat heeld þe regne after his fader day
he by his fader couþe nouȝt be war [leaf 239]
ffor prowd he was of herte and of array 3376
And eek an ydolatre was he ay
his heihe astate asseured him in pryde
But fortune caste him doun and þer he lay
And sodeinly his regne gan deuyde / 3380

¶ A feste he made vnto his lordes alle
vpon a tyme he made hem bliþe be /
And þenne his officeres gan he calle
Goode bringeth forth þe vesselles q*uod* he 3384
Which þat my fader in his p*rosper*ite
Out of þe temple of Ier*usal*em byrafte
And to oure heihe goddes þanke we
Of honour þat oure eldres wiþ vs lafte 3388

¶ His wyf his lordes and his concubynes
Ay drunken whiles here appetyte laste /
Out of þis noble vesseles sondry wynes /
And on a wal þis king his eyhen caste 3392
And saugh̃ an hande armles þat/ wrot ful faste
ffor feer of which he quook and siked sore
This hande þat Baltazar made so sore agast
Wrot mane techel phares and no more 3396

¶ In al þat lond magicien was þer non
That coupe expoune what þis lettre ment
But Daniel expouned it anon
And sayde king god to þi fader sent 3400
Glory and honour Regne tresor and rent
And he was prowde and no þing god ne dradde /
And þerfore god gret wreche vpon him sent
And him byrafte þe regne þat he hadde 3404

¶ He was out cast of mannes companye
Wiþ asses was his habitacioñ
And eete hey as a beeste in wete and drye
Til þat he knew by grace and by resoun 3408
That god of heuen haþ domynacioñ
Ouer eu*er*y regne and eu*er*y creature
And þenne hadde god of him compassioñ [leaf 239, back]
And him restored his regne and his figur*e* 3412

¶ Eke þou þat art his sone art proud also
And knowest alle þis þinges pryuyly
and art rebell to god and art his foo
Thou drank eeke of his vessels boldely 3416
Thy wyf eek and þy wenche synfully
Drank of þe same vessels sondry wynes
And heryed false goddes cursedly
Ther fore to þe schapen gret pyne is / 3420

¶ This hand was sent fro god þat on þe wal
Wrot mane techel phares truste me
Thin regne is doon þou weyest not at al
Deuyded is þy regne and it schal be 3424
To Medes and to P*er*ses ȝeuen q*uod* he
And þilke same nigħt þe king was slawe
And Daryus occupieth his degre
They he þ*er*to nad neyþ*er* rigħt ne lawe 3428

¶ Lordynges her-by ensample may ȝe take
How þat' in lordschipe is no sikernesse
ffor whan fortune wole a man forsake
He bereþ a-wey his regne and his richesse / 3432
And eek' his freendes boþe more and lesse
And what' man haþ freendes þurgh fortune
Mishap wole make hem enemys I gesse
This p*rouer*be is ful soþ and ful co*m*mune 3436

[*Zenobia.*]

¶ Cenobya of' Palymere þe queene ¶ De Cenobia Palymer*ie* regina
As writen P*er*siens of' hire noblesse
So worþy was in armes and so keene
That' no wight' passed hire in hardynesse / 3440
Ne in lynage ne in oþer gentillesse /
Of' kinges blood of' P*er*ce sche descended
I saye þat' sche nad nouȝt' most' fairnesse
But' of' hire schap sche might' nought' ben amended 3444

¶ ffro hire childhode I fynde þat' sche fledde
Office of' wo*m*men and to woode sche wente
And many a wilde hertes blood sche schedde [leaf 240]
With arwes brode þat' sche to hem sente / 3448
Sche was so swyfte þat' sche anon hem hente
And whan þat' sche was elder sche wold kille
Leouns luperdes and beres alto-rent'
And in hire armes welde hem at' hire wille 3452

¶ Sche dorste wilde bestes dennes seeke
And rennen in þe mounteinz al þe night'
And slepe vnder a bussche and sche couþe eeke
Wrastlen by v*er*ray force and v*er*ray might' 3456
Wiþ any ȝong' man were he neuer so wight'
Ther mighte no þing' in hir armes stonde
Sche kepte hir maydenhed fro eu*er*y wight'
To no man deyned hire to be bonde / 3460

¶ But atte laste hir freendes han hire maryed
To Odenake a Prince of þat Cite
Al were it so þat sche hem longe taryed
And ȝe schuln vnderstonde how þat he 3464
Hadde suche fantasies as hadde sche
But naþeles whan þey were knette in feere
They lyueden in ioye and in felicite
ffor sche of hem hadde oþer leef and deere / 3468

[Saue oo thyng/ that/ sche wolde neuyr/ assente.] [Harl. MS 1758, f 187]
By no wey þat he schulde by hire lye
But ones for it/ was hire pleyne entent
To haue a childe þe world to multiplye 3472
And al so sone as sche might aspye
That sche nas nouȝt wiþ childe wiþ þat dede
Thanne wolde sche suffre him don his fantasye
Eftsone and nouȝt but ones out of drede / 3476

¶ And if sche were wiþ childe at þilke caste
No more schulde he pleye þilke game
Til fully fourty dayes were paste
Thenne wolde sche ones do suffre him þe same 3480
Al were þis Odenak wilde or tame
he gat nomore of hire for þus sche sayde
It was to wyfes lecchery and schame /
In oþer caas if þat men with hem playde [leaf 240, back]

¶ Tuo sones by þis Odonak had sche
The whiche sche kepte in vertu and lettrure
But now vnto oure tale turne we /
I saye þat worschipful creature 3488
And wys *þer*with and large wiþ mesure
So penyble in þe werre and curteys eeke
No more laboure mighte in werre endure
Was non þey alle þis world men schulde seke 3492

¶ Hire riche aray mighte nought be told
As wel in vessel as in hir clopinge
Sche was al cladde in perrye and in goolde
And eek sche lefte nought for non huntynge 3496
To haue of sondry tonges folk knowynge
Whan pat sche leyser hadde and for to entende
To lerne bookes was al hire likynge
How sche in vertu migh̄t hir lyf dispende 3500

[And schortly of/ this/ storie for to entrete .] [Harl. MS 1758, *leaf* 187, *back*]
¶ So dough̄ty was hire housebande as sche
That pey conquered many regnes grete
In pe orient wip many a fair Cite 3504
Apportienañt vnto pe mageste
Of Rome and with strong hand heeld hem faste
Ne neuer migh̄t here fomen don hem fle
Ay whiles pat Oedenak dayes laste 3508

¶ Here batayles who so luste hem for to ride ·
Agayn Sapor pe king and oper mo ·
And how pat al pis proces felle in · dede ·
Why sche conquered and what title had perto 3512
And after of hire meschief and hire woo
how pat sche was beseged and y-take
let him vnto my mayster Petrarke go
That writ of pis ynough̄ I vndertake 3516

¶ Whan Odenake was deed sche mightily
The regnes huld and wip hir propre hand
Agayn hire foos sche faugh̄t trewely
That per nas king ne Prince in al pat land 3520
That he nas gladde if pat he grace fand [leaf 241]
That sche ne wolde vpon his land werrey
With hire pey made alleyance by band
To ben in pees and lete hir ryde and pley 3524

¶ The Emp*erour* of Rome Claudius
Ne him byforn þe Romain Galien
Ne dorste neuer be so coragius
Ne non Ermyne ne non Egipcien 3528
Ne Surrien ne non arabien
Wiþinne þe feeld þat dorste with hire fight
Lest þat sche wolde hem wiþ hir handes sleen
Or with hire meyne putten hem to flight 3532

[IN kynges/ abite wente hir/ sones/ two .] [Harl. MS 1758, *leaf* 187, *back*]
As Eyres of here regnes alle
And hermanno and Thymalao
Here names were as P*er*ciens hem calle 3536
But ay fortune haþ ay in hir hony galle
This mighty queene may no while en-dure
ffortune out of hire regne made hire falle
To wrecchednes and to mysauenture 3540

¶ Aurelion whan þat þe gou*er*nance
Of Rome cam in-to his handes tweye
he schoop vpon þis queen to do vengañce
And wiþ his legiouns he took his weye 3544
Toward Cenobye and schortly for to seye
He made hir flee and at þe last hir bent
And fetered hire and eek hir children tweye
And wan þe lond and home to Rome þey went 3548

¶ Among þese oþer þinges þat he wan
hire char þat was wiþ gold wrought and perre
This grete Romayn þis aurelian
Haþ wiþ him ladde for þat men schulde se 3552
Byforn his tryumphe walkeþ sche
Wiþ gilte cheynes on hire necke hangyng
Corouned sche was as after hire degre
And ful of perre charged hire cloþing 3556

¶ Allas fortune sche þat' whilom was
Dredful to kynges and to emperoures · [leaf 241, back]
Now gaureþ al þe poeple on hire allas ·
And sche þat' helmed was in starke stoures · 3560
And wan by force townes strong' and toures ·
Schal on hire heede were a vytremyte
And sche þat' bar þe septre ful of' floures
Schal bere a distaff' hir costes for to quyte 3564

[*Peter the Cruel, of Spain.*]

[1]¶ O noble o worþy petre glorie of' Spayne ¶ De Petro Spayne
Whom fortune helde so heyh in mageste ¶ Rege
Wel oughte men þin pitous deþ complayne [1 *wrongly markt* b *in margin, by a later corrector, to follow* a (De nero &c).
Thy bastard broþer made þe to fle
And after at a sege by subtilte
þow were betrayed and lad to his tent' 3570
Wher as he wiþ his owen hand slough þe
Succedyng' in þy regne and in þin rent' 3572

¶ The feeld of' snow wiþ þe egle blak' þer-Inne ¶ Bertheun Claykyn
Caught' wiþ þe lymrodde coloures as þe gledes ¶ Olyuer Mawny
he brew þis cursednes and al þe synne
The wicked neste was werker of' þis needes [*Bertrand du Guesclin, & his cousin Sir Oliver de Mauny*, l. 3579.]
Nought Charles Olyuer þat' ay took' god heede
Of' trouþe and honour but of' armorekke 3578
Genyloun Olyuer corupte for meede
Broughtest' þis worþi king' in such a brekke 3580

[*Peter of Cyprus.*]

¶ Worþy Petre king' of' Cypre also ¶ De petro regis ¶ Cypri
þat' alisaundre wan by heigh maystrie
fful many an heþen wroughtest' þou ful wo
Of' which þin owen liege had enuye 3584
And for no þing' but' for þin Chiualrie
They in þin bedde han slayn þe by þe morwe
Thus gan fortune gouerne and gye
And out' of' ioye bringe men in-to sorwe 3588

[*Bernabo Visconti, of Milan.*]

¶ Of melane gret barnabo viscounte — ¶ De Barnabo vicecom*ite* ¶ Mediolano /
God of delite and scourge of lumbardye
Why schulde nouȝt I þin fortune acounte /
Seþþen in estaat þou clombe were so hihe — 3592
Thin broþer sone þat was þin double allye
ffor he þin neuew was and sone in lawe — [leaf 242]
Wiþinne his prisoñ made þe to deye
But why ne how wot I þat þou were slawe // — 3596

[*Ugolino, Count of Pisa.*]

¶ Of þe erl hugelyne of Pyse þe langour — ¶ De hugylyn*o* Comit*e* Pisano.
Ther may no tunge telle for pite
But lytel out of pyse stant a toure
In which toure in prisoñ putte was he — 3600
And wiþ him ben his litel children þre
The eldest skarsly .v. ȝer was of age
allas fortune it was gret cruelte
Suche briddes for to putte in such a kage — 3604

¶ Dampned he was to deyen in þat prisoñ
ffor Roger which þat bisschop was of pyse
Hadde on him maade a fals suggestioñ
Thurgh which þe poeple gan on him aryse — 3608
And putten him to prysoñ in swich wyse
As ȝe haue herde and mete and drynk he hadde
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
And þ*er*-wiþ-al it was ful pore and badde — 3612

¶ And on a day bifell*e* þat in þat oure
Whan þat his mete was wont to be brought
The Gailler schutte þe dores of þe toure
He herde it wel but he saugh it nought — 3616
And in his herte anon þer felle a þought
þat þey for hunger wolde don him deyen
Allas q*uod* he allas þat I was wrought
þer-wiþ þe teeres felle fro his eyen — 3620

¶ his ȝonge sone þat þre ȝeer was of age
vnto him sayde fader why do ȝe wepe
When wil þe Gaylere bringen oure potage
Is þer no morsel bred þat ȝe do kepe 3624
I am so hungry þat I may nought slepe
Now wolde god þat I might slepen euer
Thanne schulde non hunger in my wombe crepe
þer nys no þing sauf bred þat me were leuer 3628

¶ Thus day by day þis childe gan to crye
Til in his fadres barme a doun it lay
And sayde fare wel fader I mot deye [leaf 242, back]
And kissed his fader and deyde þe same day 3632
And whan þe woful fader ded him say
ffor wo his armes tuo he gan to byte /
And sayde allas fortune and welaway
Thyn fals wheel my wo I may al wyte 3636

¶ His children wende þat it for hunger was
þat he his armes gnowe and nought for wo
And sayde fader do nouȝt so allas
But raþer ete þe fleissch vpon ous tuo 3640
Oure fleissch þou ȝaf vs take oure flessch vs fro
And ete ynough right þus to him þay sayde /
And after þat wiþinne a day or tuo
They leyde hem doun right in his lappe and deyde / 3644

Himself dispeyred eek for hunger starf
Thus ended is þe mighty erl of Pyse
ffro heih estate fortune fro him karf
Of þis tregetrye it ought ynough suffise/ 3648
Who so wol heere it in a lenger wise
Redeþ þe grete poete of ytayle /
That highte daunte for he can it deuyse
ffro poynt to poynt nouȝt o word wol he fayle 3652

[*Nero.*]

[1] ¶ Al þough þat Nero was as vicious — De nero
As eny feend þat liþ ful lowe ado*un* — [[1] *wrongly markt .a. by a later corrector, to go before Peter of Spain.*]
ȝet he as telleþ vs Swetheneus
This wilde world haþ in Subieccio*un* — 3656
Boþe Est and west and Septe*m*ptrio*un*
Of Rubies Saphires and of perlis white
Were alle his cloþes brouded vp and doun
ffor he in ge*m*mes grete gan delyte — 3660

¶ More delicate more pompous of array
More proud was neuer emp*er*our þan he
þat ilke cloþ þat he had wered a day
After þat tyme he nolde it neuer se — 3664
Nettes of golde þred hadde he gret plente
To fissche in Tybre when him leste to pleye
his lustes were as lawe in his degre — [leaf 243]
ffor fortune as his freende wolde him obeye — 3668

¶ He Rome brente for his delicacye
The senatoures he slough vpon a day
To heere how þat men wolde weepe and crye
And slough his broþer and by his suster lay — 3672
His mooder made he in pitous aray
ffor he hire wombe slitte to byholde
Where he consceyued was so weylaway
þat he so litel of his moder tolde — 3676

¶ No teere out of his eyhen for þat sight
Ne came but sayde a fair wo*m*man was sche
Gret wonder is þat he couþe or might
Be domesman of hire ded beute — 3680
The wyn to brynge þo comanded he
And drank anon . non oþ*er* wo he made /
Whan might is ioygned vnto cruelte
Allas to deepe wole þe venym wade — 3684

¶ In ȝouþe a mayst*er* hadde þis emp*er*our
To teche him lettrure and curtesye
ffor of' moralite he was þe flour
As in his tyme but' if' bookes lye 3688
And whiles his mayster hadde of' him maystrye
He made him so konnyng' and so souple /
That' longe tyme it' was or tyrannye
Or any vice dorste in him vncouple 3692

¶ This Seneka of' which I deuyse
By cause nero hadde of' him such drede
ffor he for vices wolde him chastise
Discretly as by word and nought by drede 3696
Sire wolde he sayn an Emp*er*our moot' neede
Be vertuous and hate tyrauntrye
ffor which he him in bathe made to blede
In boþe his armes til he moste dye 3700

¶ This nero hadde eek' of a costum*m*ance
In ȝouþe aȝeins his mayster for to ryse
Which aftirward him þought a gret' greuaunce [leaf 243, back]
Therfore he made him deye in þis wise 3704
But' naþeles þis Seneke þe wise /
Chees in a bathe to deye in þis manere /
Raþer þan han anoþ*er* tormentrye
And þus haþ Nero slayn his mayster deere 3708

¶ Now fell*e* it' so þat' fortune lust' no lenger
þe heihe pryde of' nero to cherissche
ffor þough he were strong' ȝet' was sche streng*er*
Sche þoughte þus by god I am to nyse 3712
To setten a man þat' is fulfilde of' vice
In heigh degre and emp*er*our him calle
By god out' of' his sete I wol him tryce
When he lest' weneþ sonnest' schal he falle 3716

¶ The poeple ros vpon him on a nightᵗ
ffor his defaute and whan he itᵗ aspyed
Outᵗ ofᵗ his dores anon he haþ him dightᵗ
Allone and þer he wende han ben allyed 3720
he knokked faste and ay þe more he cryed
þe faster schutten þey þe dores alle
Tho wiste he wel he hadde himselfᵗ begyled
And wentᵗ his way no lenger dorste he calle / 3724

¶ The poeple cryed and rombled vp and doun
þatᵗ wiþ his eeres herde he how þey sayde
Wher is þis false tyrauntᵗ þis Neroun
ffor fere almostᵗ outᵗ ofᵗ his witte a brayde 3728
And to his goddes pitously he sayde
ffor socour butᵗ itᵗ mighte noughtᵗ betyde
ffor drede ofᵗ þis him þoughte þatᵗ he deyde
and ran in to a gardyn him to huyde 3732

¶ And in þis gardyn fond he cherles tweye
And saten by a fuyre ful grete and rede
And to þe cherles twey he gan to preye
To slen him and to gurden ofᵗ his hede 3736
Thatᵗ to his body whan þatᵗ he were dede
Were no despite y-done for his deffame /
Himselfᵗ he slough he couþe no better reed [leaf 244]
Ofᵗ which fortune lough and hadde a game 3740

[*Holofernes.*]

¶ Was neuer Capitayn vnder a kingᵗ ¶ De Olipherno
þatᵗ regnes mo putte in subieccioun
Ne strenger was in feeld ofᵗ alle þingᵗ
As in his tyme ne gretter ofᵗ Renoun 3744
Ne more pompous in heigh presumpcioun
Then Olyferne which fortune ay keste /
So likerously and ladde him vp and doun
Til þatᵗ he hed was er þatᵗ he wiste / 3748

¶ Noughtꝑ oonly þatꝑ þis world had ofꝑ him awe /
ffor lesyngꝑ ofꝑ Richesse and liberte
Butꝑ he made eu*er*y man reneye his lawe /
Nabugodonosor was lord sayde 3752
Non oþer god schulde honoured be
Aȝeins his heste no wightꝑ dar trespace /
Saue in Bethulya a strangꝑ Cite
Where Elyachim a prestꝑ was ofꝑ þ*at*ꝑ place 3756

¶ Butꝑ take keepe ofꝑ þe deþ ofꝑ Olypherne
Amydde his hoste he drunke lay a nyghtꝑ
Wiþinne his tente large as is a berne /
And ȝetꝑ for all*e* his pompe and all*e* his mighꝑ 3760
Iudith a wo*m*man as he lay vprighꝑ
Slepyngꝑ his heed ofꝑ smotꝑ and fro his tent /
fful pryuyly sche stal fro eu*er*y wight
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] 3764

[*Antiochus.*]

¶ Whatꝑ needeþ itꝑ ofꝑ kingꝑ antiochus ¶ De antiochio illust*ri*.
To telle his heihe and real mageste
his heighe pruyde his werkes venymous
ffor such anoþer nas neuer non as he 3768
Redeþ which þatꝑ he was in Machabe
And redeþ þe proude wordes þatꝑ he sayde
And why he felle fro his p*ro*sp*er*ite
And in an hulle how wrecchedly he deyde 3772

¶ ffortune him hadde enhaunced so in pruyde
þatꝑ verrayly he wende he mighte atteyne
vnto þe sterres vpon euery syde 3775
And in a balaunce to weye vche mountayne / [leaf 244, back]
And all*e* þe floodes ofꝑ þe see restreyne
And goddes poeple hadde he mostꝑ in hate
Hem wolde he sle in tormentꝑ and peyne /
Wenyngꝑ þatꝑ god ne mightꝑ his pruyde abate 3780

¶ And for þat Nichamour and Thymothee
Wiþ Iewes were venquyscht mightily
Vnto þe Iewes swich an hate hadde he
That he hadde greythed his chaar ful hastily 3784
And swor and sayde ful dispitously
vnto Ier*usal*em he wolde eft sone /
To wreke his Ire on hit ful cruelly
But of his purpos he was lette ful sone / 3788

¶ God for his manace him so sore smot/
Wiþ inuisible wounde ay vncurable/
That in his guttes karf so and bote
That his peynes were importable 3792
And certeynly þe wreche was resonable
ffor many mannes guttes dede he payne
But fro his pourpos cursed and dampnable
ffor all*e* his smerte he nolde him nought restreyne 3796

¶ But bad anon apparaylen his Oste
And sodeinly er he was of hit/ ware
God daunted all*e* his pruyde and all*e* his boste
ffor he so sore felle out of his chare 3800
That hurt his lymes and his skyn totare
So þat he ne mighte go ne ryde
But in a Chayer men aboute him bare
Al forbrused boþe bak and syde 3804

¶ The wreche of god him smot so cruelly
That in his body wickede wormes crepte
And þ*er*-wiþ-al he stank so orribly
That non of all*e* his meigne þat him kepte / 3808
Wheþer so þat he wook or elles slepte /
Ne mighte nought/ þe stynk of him endure
In þis meschief he weyled and eek wepte /
And knewe god lord of eu*er*y creature [leaf 245] 3812

¶ To alle his hostꝰ and to himselfꝰ also
fful wlatsom was þe stynke ofꝰ þis Careyne
No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro
And in his stynke and in his horible peyne 3816
He starfꝰ ful wrecchedly in a mounteyne
Thus haþ þis robbour and þis homicide
That many a man made to weepe and pleyne
Such guerdoñ as bilongeþ vnto pruyde / 3820

[*Alexander the Great.*]

¶ The story ofꝰ alisaundre is so commune ¶ De alexandro magno philippi Regis Macedonie filio.
Thatꝰ euery wightꝰ þatꝰ haþ discrecioun
haþ herd somwhatꝰ or al ofꝰ his fortune
This wilde world as in conclusioun 3824
He wan by strengþe or for his heigh renoun
They weren glad for pees vnto him sende
The pruyde ofꝰ man and beste he leyde a doun
Wher so he cam vnto þe worldes ende 3828

¶ Comparisoñ mig̃ht neuer ȝit/ be maked
Betwix him and anoþer conqueror
ffor alle þis worlde for drede ofꝰ him haþ quaked
he was ofꝰ knighthede and ofꝰ fredam flour 3832
ffortune him made þe heier ofꝰ h̃ure honour
Saue wyn and wommen no þingꝰ mightꝰ aswage /
His heihe ententꝰ in armes and labour
So was he fulle ofꝰ louynge corage 3836

¶ Whatꝰ pite were itꝰ to him þey I ȝou tolde
Ofꝰ darius and an .C. þousand mo
Ofꝰ kinges princes dukes eerles bolde
Which he conquered and brouȝtꝰ hem in-to woo 3840
I say as fer as man may ryde or goo
þe worlde was his whatꝰ schulde I more deuyse
ffor þoug̃h I write or tolde ȝou euermo
Of his knig̃hthode he mighte noughtꝰ suffise 3844

¶ Twelf ȝeer he regned as saiþ Machabe
Philippes sone of Macedo he was /
That first was king of Grece þe Contre /
O worþy gentil alisandre allas [leaf 245, back] 3848
þat euer schulde falle such a caas
Enpoysoned of þin folk þou were
þyn . S fortune haþ torned in-to an aas
And ȝet for þe ne weep sche neuer a tere 3852

¶ Who schal men ȝeue teeres to compleyne
The deþ of gentilesse and of fraunchise
þat alle þe world weeldid in his demeygne /
And ȝet him þoughte it might not suffise / 3856
So ful was his corage of heigh emprise
Allas who schal me helpe to endite
ffals fortune and poysoñ to despise
þe whiche tuo of al þis wo I wite 3860

[*Julius Cæsar.*]

¶ By wisedom manhede and by labour ¶ De Iulio Cesare.
ffro humbleheed and fro Royal mageste
vp ros he Iulius þe Conquero*ur*
That alle þe Occident by land and fee 3864
By strengþe of hand or elles by tretee
And vnto Rome made hem tributarie
And seþenes of Rome þemp*erour* was he
Til þat fortune wax his adu*er*sarie 3868

¶ O mighty Cesar þat in Tessalye
Aȝens Pompeus fader þin in lawe
That of þe Orient hadde al þe chiualrye
as ferre as þat þe day begynneþ dawe 3872
þou þorugh þin knighthode þou hast hem take and slawe /
Saue fewe folk þat wiþ Pompeus fledde /
þurgh which þou puttest al þe Orient in awe
Thanke fortune þat so wel þe spedde 3876

¶ But now a litel while I wol bewayle /
þis Pompeus þis noble gouernour
Of' Rome which þat' fleigh at' þis batayle
I say on of' his men a fals trayto*ur* 3880
His heed of' smoot/ to wynne him fauo*ur*
Of' Iulius and him þe heed broughte
Allas Pompeye of' þe Orient' conquero*ur*
That fortune vnto such a finye brought̄e [leaf 246] 3884

¶ To Rome aȝein repayreþ Iulius
Wiþ his triumphe laureate ful heyȝe
But' on a tyme Brutus Cassius
That' euer had of' his heigh̄ estaat' enuye 3888
fful priuily had maad conspiracie
Aȝeins þis Iulius in subtil wise
And caste þe place in which he schulde deye
Wiþ boydekynnes as I schal ȝou deuyse 3892

¶ þis Iulius to þe Capithole went
vppon a day as he was wont' to goon
And in þe Capitolye anon him hent'
This false brutus on his foule foon 3896
And stiked him wiþ boydekynnes anon
Wiþ many a wounde and þus þey leet/ him lye
But' neuer gronte he at' no stroke but oon
Or elles at' tuo but' if' his story lye 3900

¶ So manly was þis Iulius of' herte
And so wel loued estaatly honeste
That' þough his dedly woundes so sore smerte
His mantel ouer his hepes caste he 3904
ffor noman schulde seen his p*ri*uyte
And as he lay as deyinge in a traunce
And wiste v*er*rily þat' deed was he
Of' honeste ȝet' hadde he rememb*ra*nce 3908

¶ Lucane to þis story I recomende
And to Swetoñ and to Valerius also
That of þis story writeþ word and ende
how þat þese grete conqueroures tuo 3912
ffortune was ferst freend and siþen a foo
No man ne truste vpon his fauour longe
But haue hire in awayte for eueremo
Witnesse on alle þise conqueroures stronge 3916

[*Cresus.*]

¶ This riche Cresus whilom king of lyde Cresus.
Of whiche Cresus Cyquus sore him dradde
ȝet was he caught amyddes alle his pryde 3919
And to be brent men to þe fuyre him ladde [leaf 216, back]
But such a reyn doun fro þe walken schadde
þat slough þe fuyr and made him to askape
But to be war ȝet no grace he hadde
Til fortune on þe galwes made him gape 3924

¶ Whan he askaped was he can not stynte
ffor to begynne a newe reyne aȝein
he wende wel for þat fortune him sente
Such happe þat he escaped þurgh þe rayn 3928
That of his foos he mighte not be slayn
And swich a swefne vppan a night he mette
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn
That in vengaunce he alle his herte sette 3932

¶ Vpon a tree he was as þat him þought
There Iubiter him wisshe boþe halse and syde
And Phebus eek a fair towayle him broughte
To druye him wiþ and þerfore wax his pryde 3936
And to his doughter þat stood him besyde
Which þat he knew in heigh sentence abounde
He bad hire telle him what it signefyed
And sche his dreemes bygan right þus expounde 3940

¶ The tree q*uod* sche þe galwes is to mene
And Iubiter bitokneþ snow and rayn
And Phebus wiþ his towayle so clene
Tho be þe sonne stremes for to sayn 3944
Thou schalt an honged be fader certayn
Reyn schal þe waissche and sonne schal þe druye
þus warned him ful platte and ful playn
His doughter þat called was Phanye / 3948

¶ An honged was Cresus þe proude king
His roial trone might him nought auayle
Tegedie is non o*þer* man*er* þing
Ne can synnynge crye ne by-wayle 3952
But þat fortune alway wol assayle /
Wiþ vnwar strook þe regnes that ben proude
ffor whan men trusteþ hire þan wol sche fayle
And couere hire brighte face wiþ a cloude [leaf 247] 3956

¶ Explic*it*/

¶ Here begynneþ þe prologe of þe nonne prestes tale
[*on leaf* 247]

HO q*uod* þe knigħt goode sire nomore of þis
þat ȝe han sayde is right ynough ywis
And meche more for litel heuynesse
Is right ynough to meche folk as I gesse / [*no gap in the Corpus MS*] 3960
[I sey for me. it is a grete disease [MS Reg. 17 D. xv, *lf* 273, *bk*]
Where as men han bien. in grete welth and ease
To here of theyr sodayn falle alas
And the contrary is Ioy. and grete solas 3964
And whan a man hath bien in pou*er* estate
And clymbith vp. and wexith fortunate
And ther abydith · in prosperite [*leaf* 274]
Swiche thyng is gladsom. as it thynkyth me 3968
And of swiche thynges. were goodely for to telle
Ya quod oure host. be seynt poulis belle
Ye say right soth. this monk be clappid lowde
He spak how fortune. was cou*er*ed with a clowde 3972
I not neu*er* what. and als of a tregedye
Right now ye herd. and parde no remedye
Is it for to be-wailen. and compleyn
That. that is don. and als it is a peyn 3976
As ye have sayd. to here of hevynesse
Sir monke nomore of this. so god yow blisse
Yowre tale anoyeth. al this company
Swiche thyng is nat worth a boterflye] [MS Reg. *extract ends*]
ȝoure tales don vs no desport ne game
Wherfore s*ir* monk Doun Pieres by ȝour name
I pray ȝou hertely telle vs som what elles
ffor siker nere clynkyng of ȝoure belles / 3984

þat on ȝoure brydel hangeþ on eu*er*y syde /
By heuene king þat for vs all*e* dyde
I schal for þis falle do*un* for slepe /
Al þough þe slough hadde neuer ben so depe 3988
þan hadde ȝoure tale be told in vayn
ffor certeinly as þese clerkes sayn
Wher as a man may han non audience
Nought helpeþ it to tellen his sentence 3992
And wel I woot þe substance is in me /
If eny þing schal wel reported be
Sire say somwhat of huntyng I ȝou p*ray*
Nay q*uod* þe monk I haue no lust to play 3996
Now lete anoþ*er* telle as I haue tolde
þanne spak oure Ost wiþ ruyde speche and bolde
And sayde vnto þe nonnes prest anon
Come ner sire prest com hider s*ir* Iohn 4000
Telle vs such þing as may oure hertes glade
Be mery þough þou ryde vpon a Iade /
What þough þin hors be hagged foul or lene
If he wol serue þe rekke þe nought a bene 4004
Loke þat þin herte be mery euermo
ȝis Ost q*uod* he so mote I ryde or go
But I be mery I-wys I wil be blamed
And right anon he haþ his tale tamed 4008
And þus he seyde to vs eu*er*ychon
This swete prest þis goode man s*ir* Iohn . ¶ Explic*it* p*rolog*us

Ca^m xxij^m

¶ Here begynneþ þe nonnes prestes tale of^t þe kokke & his vij. hennes

A Pou*er*e wydewe somdel stope in age [leaf 247, back]
Was whilom dwellyng^t in a narwe cotage 4012
Besydes a groue standyng^t in a dale
This wydewe of^t which I telle ȝou my tale
Seþins þilke day þat^t sche was last/ a wyf^t
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf^t 4016
ffor litel was hire catell*e* and hire rent
By housbondrye of^t such as god hire sent^t
Sche fand hire self^t and eek^t hire doughtren tuo
þre large sowes hadde sche and nomo 4020
Thre kyn and eek^t a scheep þat^t hight*e* malle
fful sooty was hire bour and eek^t hire halle
In which sche eet^t ful many a sklender mel
Of^t poynañt^t Sause hire needed neuer a del 4024
No deynte morsell passed hire þrote
Hire dyete was acordañt to hire cote
Repleciõ ne made hire neuere seeke
A-tempree diete was all*e* hire Phiseke 4028
And excersise and hertes suffisañce
The gowte letted hire no þing^t to daunce
Ne Poplexie ne schente not hire heed
No wyn ne drank^t sche neyþ*er* whit ne reed 4032
Hire bord was s*er*ued most^t wiþ whit and blak
Milk^t and bro*u*n breed in which sche fond no lak
Seynd bacõ and somtyme an ey or tweye
ffor sche was as it^t was a maner deye 4036
A gardyn sche hadde enclosed all*e* aboute
Wiþ stikkes and a druye diche wiþoute
In which sche hadde a cokk^t þat^t hight*e* Chaunteclere
In all*e* þe land of^t crowyng^t nas his peere 4040

his voys was merier þan þe mery Orgon
On masse dayes þat in þe chirche gon
Wel sikerer was þe crowyng in his logge
þan is a clokke or eny abbay orlogge 4044
By nature he knew eche assencioñ
Of equinoxial of þilke toun
ffor whan degrees .xv. were discendid [leaf 218]
þenne knew he þat it mig̃ht noug̃ht ben amended 4048
His cambe was redder þen þe fyn coralle
And batailled as it were a castel walle
Ylike asure were his legges and his toon
His byle was blak and as þe Iet it schon 4052
His nayles whitter þen þe lily flour
And ylike burnyssc̃ht gold was his colour
This gentil cokke hadde in his gouernance /
.vij. hennes for to doon his plesañce 4056
Whiche weren his sustres and his paramoures
And wonder ylike to him as of coloures
Of which þe fairest hewed on þe þrote
Was cleped faire damisel pertelote 4060
Curteys sche was discret and debonaire
And companable / and bar hire self so faire
Siþens þilke day þat sche was seuenyg̃ht olde
þat trewely sche haþ þe herte in holde 4064
Of chaunteclere loken in euery liþ
He loued hire so þat wel was him þerwith
But such a ioye as it was to heere hem synge
Whan þat þe brighte sonne gan to springe 4068
In swete acorde my leef is fare in londe /
ffor þilke tyme as I haue vnderstonde
Beestes and briddes couþe speke and synge
And so bifelle þat in a dawenynge / 4072
As Chaunteclere among his wyfes alle
Satte on his perche þat was in þe halle
And next him sat þis faire Pertelote
þis Chaunteclere gan gronen in his þrote 4076

As a man þat is in his dreme drecched sore
And when þat Pertelote þus herde him rore
Sche was agast/ and sayde herte deere
What eyleþ ȝou to grone in þis manere 4080
ȝe ben a verray sleper fy for schame /
And he answerde and sayde þus ma dame /
I pray ȝou þat ȝe take it not to greef [leaf 248, back]
By god me mette þat I was in such mescheef 4084
Right now þat ȝet myn herte is sore afright
Now quod he my sweuene reed aright
And keepe my body out of foul prisoun
Me mette þat I romed vp and doun 4088
Wiþinne oure ȝerde wher as I saugh a beeste
Was lik an hound and wolde han made areste /
vpon my body and wolde han had me deed
His colour was betwixe whit and reed 4092
And tipped was his tail and boþe his eeres
Wiþ blak vnlik þe remenant of his heeres
his snowte smal with glowyng eyen tweye
ȝet of his look for feer almost I deye 4096
This caused me my gronyng douteles
Avoy quod sche // ffy on ȝou herteles
Allas quod sche ! ffor by þat god aboue
Now haue ȝe lost myn herte and al my loue 4100
I can nought loue a coward by my feiþ
ffor certes what so eny womman seiþ
We wolle alle desyren if it mighte be
To haue housbondes hardy wise and fre 4104
And secre ne no nyggard ne no fool
Ne him þat is agast of euery tool
Ne non auauntour by þat god aboue
How dorste ȝe say for schame vnto ȝoure loue / 4108
That eny þing might make ȝou aferd [1 *not in* Reg. 18 C 2, *if* 228]
Han ȝe no mannes herte and han a berd
Allas and konne ȝe be agast of sweuons
[Nothyng god wote. but vanite in sweuene is[1]] [Reg. 17 D xv, *leaf* 276]

Sweuenes engendren of replexiones [1 *not in* Reg. 18 C 2]
[And oft of synne. and of complexiouns [1]] [MS Reg. 17 D xv]
When humo*ur*s ben to habundaunt in a wight
Certes þis dreme which ȝe han herd to nyght 4116
Cometh of þe grete sup*er*fluite
Of ȝoure reede colre sire p*ar*de
Which causeþ folk to dremen here dreemes
Of arwes and of fuyre with reede leemes 4120
Of reede bestes þat woln hem byte [leaf 249]
Of Contell*e* and of whelpes grete an lyte
Right as he humour malencolie
Causeþ many a man in slepe to crye 4124
ffor feere of beres and of boles blake
Or elles blake deueles woln hem take
Of oþer humours couþe I telle also
þat worken many a man in sleep ful woo 4128
But I wol passe as lightly as I can
Lo Catoñ which þat was so wys a man
Sayde he nouȝt þus ne do no force of dremes
Now sire q*uod* sche whan we flee fro þe beemes 4132
ffor goddes loue as takeþ som laxatif
Vp p*er*il of my soule and of my lyf
I counceile ȝou þe beste I wol not lye
þat boþe of colre and of malencolye 4136
ȝe purge ȝou and for ȝe schuln nought tary
þough þat in þis toun is non apotecary
I schal my self to herbes techen ȝou
That schal ben ȝoure hele and ȝoure prow 4140
And in þe gardyn þo herbes schal I fynde
The whiche han of here p*ro*prete by kynde
To purgen ȝou bynepe and eek aboue
fforȝeteþ nouȝt þis for goddes owne loue 4144
ȝe ben ful Colrik of Compleccioñ
Were þe sonne in his ascencioñ
Ne fynde ȝou replete and ȝoure humors hote
and if it do I dar wel leye a groote 4148

That ȝe schuln haue a feuer terciane
Or an agu þat may ben ȝoure bane
A day or tuo ȝe schuln haue digestyues
Of wormes er ȝe take ȝoure laxatyues 4152
Of laureole Centure and of fumytere
Or ellis of Ellebore þat groweþ þere
Of Catapuce or of gaytres buryes
Of herbe yue growyng in oure ȝerde þer mery is 4156
Pek hem vp right as þey growe and et hem In [leaf 249, back]
Be mery housbande for ȝoure fadres kyn
Dredeþ no dreem I can say ȝou no more
Ma dame q*uod* he grame*r*cy of ȝoure lore 4160
But naþeles as touching dann Cato*u*n
That haþ of wisdom such a gret reno*u*n
By god men may in olde bookes reede
Oon of þe grettest auctour out of drede 4164
Of many a man more of auctorite
þenne euer Catoñ was so mote I þe
That alle þe reuers sein of his sentence
And han wel founden by expe*r*ience 4168
þat dreemes ben significacioñs
As wel of ioye as of tribulac*i*ons
þat folk enduren in þis lyf p*r*esent
Ther needeþ nouȝt to make of þis non argument 4172
The verray preef scheweþ it in dede
On of þe grettest auctour þat men rede
Saiþ þus þat whilom tuo felawes went
On pylgrimage in a ful good entent 4176
And happed so þey camen in-to a toun
Wher as þer was such congregacioñ
Of poeple and eek of streight herburgage
That þey ne fand as moche as a cotage / 4180
In which þey boþe might y-logged be
Wherfore þey mosten of necessite
As for þat night departe of companye
And vche of hem goþ vnto his ostelrye 4184

And took' his loggynge as it' wolde falle
That' oon of' hem was logged in a stalle
fferre in a ȝerde wiþ oxen of' þe plough
þat' oþer man was logged wel ynough 4188
As was his aduenture or his fortune
þat' vs gouerneþ alle as in comune
And so bifelle it' lange er it was day
þis man mette in his bedde *þer* as he lay 4192
how þat' his felaw gan on him to calle [leaf 250]
And sayde allas for in an oxe stalle
This night' schal I be mourdred þer I lye
Now help me deere broþer er I dye 4196
In alle haste come to me he seyde
This man out' of' his sleep for feere abrayde
But' whan þat' he was wakened out' of' his slepe
he turned him and tok' of' þis no kepe / 4200
Him þought' his dreem was nought/ but' vanyte
þus twyes in his sleping' dremed he
And at' þe þridde tyme ȝet' his felawe
Came as him þought' I am now y-slawe 4204
Byholde my bloody woundes deepe and wyde /
Arys vp erely in þe morne tyde /
And at' þe west' gate of' þe toun q*uod* he
A carte fulle of' dunge þere schalt' þou se / 4208
In which my body is hidde ful pryuyly
Do þilke carte aresten boldely
My golde caused my murdre soþ to sayn
And tolde him eu*er*y poynt' how he was slayn 4212
Wiþ a ful pitous face pale of' hewe
And truste wel his dreem he fand ful trewe
ffor on þe morwe as sone as it' was day
To his felawes In he tok' þe way 4216
And whan he com vnto þis Oxe stalle
After his felawe he bigan to calle
The Ostiler answered him anon
And sayde sire ȝoure felawe is y-gon 4220

As sone as day he wente out of þe toun
This man gan falle in gret suspecion
Remembryng on his dreemes þat he mette
And forþ he goþ no lenger wolde he lette 4224
Vnto þe west gate of þe toun and fonde
A dung carte as he wente to dunge þe londe /
þat was arrayed in þe same wyse
As ȝe han herde þe deede man deuyse 4228
And wiþ an hardy herte he gan to crye [leaf 250, back]
Vengaunce and Iustice of þis felonye
My felawe murdred is þis same nigħt
And in þis cart he lyþ gapyng vprigħt 4232
[I Crie oute on þe mynistris q*uo*d he [MS Harl. 7333 (Shirley's), *leaf* 113, *col.* 1. *Not in* Sloane 1685, *leaf* 217, *back; or in* Sloane 1686, *leaf* 285.]
þat shulde kepe and rewle þis citee
Harrow allas here liħ my felaw slayn
What shuld I more vn-to this tale sayn 4326
þe peple out sterte / & caste þe carte to grounde
And in the medil of the donge þei fo*u*nde] [Harl. *extract ends*]
The deede man þat murdred was al newe
O blisful god þat art so iuste and trewe / 4240
Lo how þat þou bywreyest murdre alway
Murdre wole out þat se we day by day
Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable
To god þat is so iuste and resonable 4244
That he wol not suffre it hiled be
They it abyde a ȝeer or tuo or þre
Mordre wole out þis is my conclusion
And rigħt anon ministres of þe toun 4248
And hente þe cartere and sore him pyned
And eek þe osteller so ferre engyned
That þey beknewe here wickednesse anon
And weren hanged by þe nekke boon 4252
Heer may men see þat dreemes ben to drede
And certes in þe same book I rede
Right in þe nexte chapitre I rede of þis
I gabbe nougħt/ so haue I ioye & blis 4256

Tuo men þat wolde han passed þe see
ffor certein cause in-to a ferre cuntre
If þat þe wynde nad y-be contrary
þat made hem in a Cite for to tary 4260
That stood ful mery vpon an hauen side
But on a day aȝens þe euen tyde
The wynd gan chaunge and blowen as him leste
Iolyf and glad þey wenten vnto reste 4264
And casten hem ful erly for to seyle
But herkne þat oo man felle in gret pereyle
That oon of hem in slepyng as he lay
Him mette a wonder dreme aȝeins þe day 4268
Him þought a man stood by his beddes syde
And him comānded þat he schulde abyde
And seyde him þus if þou to morwe wende [leaf 251]
Thou schalt be draynt my tale is at an ende 4272
he awook and tolde his felawe what he mette
and prayed him his viage for to lette
As for þat day he prayde him to abyde
his felawe þat lay by his beddes syde 4276
Gan for to laughe and scorned him ful faste
No dreme q*uod* he may my*n* herte agaste
þat I wol lette for to do my þinges
I sette nouȝt a straw by þy dremynges 4280
ffor sweuenes ben but vanytes and Iapes
Men dreme alway of owles and of apes
And of many a mase þer-wiþ-aH
Men dremen of þing þat neuer was ne schal 4284
But siþenes I se þat þou wolt here abyde
And þus forslowþen wilfully þe tyde
God wot it reweþ me and haue good day
And thus he took his leeue and went his way 4288
And er þat he hadde half his cours y-sayled
Not I nought why ne what meschaunce it ayled
But casuelly þe schippes botme rent
And schip and man vnder þe water went 4292

In sight of oper schippes him besyde
pat wip him seyled at pe same tyde
And perfore he seyde Pertelote so deere
By suche ensamples olde maist pou leere 4296
pat no man schulde be to recheles
Of dremes for I say pe dowteles
That many a dreem fol sore is for to drede
Lo in pe lyf of Seint kenelme I rede 4300
pat was kenulphes sone pe noble king
Of Mertenrike how kenelme met a ping
A litel er was murdred on a day
His murdre in his avisioñ he say 4304
His norice him expouned eury del
His sweuene and bad him for to kepe him wel
ffor tresoñ but he was seuen ȝeer old [leaf 251, back]
And perfore litel tale hap he told 4308
Of eny dreem so holly was his herte
By god I hadde leuer pan my scherte
pat ȝe hadde herde his legende as haue I
Dame pertelote I say ȝou trewely 4312
Macrobeus pat writ pe avisioun
In affryke of pe worpy Cyprioun
Affermep dremes and saip pat pay ben
Warnyng of pinges pat men after seen 4316
And furpermore I pray ȝou lokep wel
pe olde testament of Daniel
If he heeld dreemes of any vanyte
Reede eek of Ioseph and per schuln ȝe see 4320
Wheper dremes ben som tyme I say not alle
Warnyng of pinges pat schuln after falle
Loke of Egypt pe king Daun Pharao
His baker and his botiler also 4324
Wher pey ne felten noon effecte in dremes
Who so wol seche pe acte of sondry Remes
May rede of dreemes many a wonder ping
Lo Cresus which pat was of lyde king 4328

Mette he nou3t þat he sat on a tree
Which signified he schulde anhanged be
Lo here adromacha Ectores wiff
That day þat Ector schulde lese his lyff 4332
Sche dreemed on þe same night byforn
How þat þe lyff of Ector schulde be lorn
If þilke day he went in-to Batayle
Sche warned him but it mighť nou3t auayle 4336
He wente for to feighten neuer þe les
But he was slayn of oon achilles
But þilke tale is al to long to telle
And eek it is neigh day I may nou3t dwelle 4340
Schortly I say as for conclusioñ
þat I schal haue of þis auisioñ
Of adu*er*sitees and I say for*þer*more [leaf 252]
That I nel telle of laxatifs no store 4344
ffor þey ben venymous I wot right wel
I hem diffye I loue hem neuer a del
Now let vs speke of myrþe and stynte al þis
Madame p*er*telote so haue I blis 4348
Of o þing god me haþ sent large g*ra*ce
ffor when I se þe beaute of 3our face
3e ben so skarlet reed aboute 3oure eyen
It makeþ all*e* my drede for to deyen 4352
ffor al so siker as In principio
Mulier est ho*min*is confusio
Ma dame þe sentence of þis latyn is
Wo*m*man is mannes ioye and al his blys 4356
ffor whan I feele a night 3oure softe syde
Al be it þat I may nought on 3ou ryde
ffor þat oure p*er*che is maad so narwe allas
I am so fulle of ioye and solas 4360
That I diffye boþe sweuen and dreem
And wiþ þat word he fleigh doun fro þe beem
ffor it was day and eek his hennes all*e*
And wiþ a chukke he gan hem for to call*e* 4364

ffor he had founde a corn lay in þe ȝerde
Real he was nomore aferde
He feþerede p*er*telote twenty tyme
And tradde as ofte er it were p*ri*me 4368
He lokeþ as it were a grym lyo*u*n
And on his toos he romed vp and do*u*n
Him deygned nouȝt to sette his feet on grounde
Ay chukked he whan he hadde a corn y-founde 4372
And to him þanne ranne his wyfes all*e*
Þus real as a prince in his halle
leue I þis Chaunteclere in his pasture
And after wol I telle of his aduentur*e* 4376
When þe monþe in which þe world bigan
þat highte march when god first made man
Was complete and passed were also [leaf 252, back]
Seþins marche bygan þritty dayes and tuo 4380
Bifell*e* þat Chaunteclere in all*e* his pryde
his seuen wyues walkyng him bysyde
Caste vp his eyen to þe brighte sonne
That in þe signe of Taurus was y-ronne 4384
Twenty degrees . and oon and somwhat more
He knew by kynde and by non oþ*er* lore
That it was pryme and crew wiþ blisful steuene
The sonne he sayde is clumben vp on heuene 4388
xl. degrees and oon and more y-wys
Madame p*er*telote my worldes blys
Herkne how þese blisful briddes synge
and see þe freisshe floures how þay springe 4392
fful is my*n* herte of Reuel and solace
But sodeinly him fel a sorwful case
ffor euer þe latter ende of Ioye is sone ago
And comunly often tyme it falleþ so 4396
And if a Rethor couþe faire endite
He in a Croniq*ue* mighte saufly write
As for a souereyn notabilite /
Now euery wise man herkene to me 4400

This story is also trewe I vndertake
As is þe book' of' launcelot' þe lake
þat' wo*m*men heelde in ful gret' reuerence
Now wol I torne aȝein to my sentence 4404
A kolle fox ful of' sleighte and iniquite
That' in þe groue had woned ȝeeres þre
By heih ymaginacioñ aforn caste
þe same night' þurghout' þe hegges braste 4408
In-to þe yerde þer Chaunteclere þe faire
Was wont' and eek' his wyfes to repayre
And in a bedde of' worstes stille he lay
Til it' was passed vndern of' þe day 4412
Wayting' his tyme on chaunteclere to falle
As gladly doon þese homicydes alle [leaf 253]
That' in awayte ligge to murþre men
O false murdrour roukyng' in þy den 4416
O newe scariote and newe Genyloun
ffals dissimulour O greke Synoñ
That' broughtest' Troye outrely to sorwe
O Chaunteclere acorsed be þat' morwe 4420
þat' þou in þe ȝerde fleyȝe fro þe beemes
Thou were ful wel y-warned by þin derems
That' þilke day was p*er*ilous to þe
But' þat' at' god afore wot' moot' needes be 4424
After þe opynyoñ of certein clerkes
Witnesse on him þat' any clerk/ is
That' in scole gret' altercacioñ
In þis matiere and gret' disputesoñ 4428
And haþ ben of' an hundred þousand men
But I ne can nouȝt' bulte it to þe bren
As can þe holy doctour augustyn
Or Boece or þe Bisschoppe Bradwardyn 4432
Wheþer þat/ goddes wille afore wetyng'
Streyneþ me needely for to don a þing'
Needly clepe I simple necessite
Or elles if' þe free choys be g*ra*unted me / 4436

To do þat' same þing' or to do it nou3t
þough god forwot' it' er it' was y-wrought'
Or of' his wetyng' streigneþ neuer a del
But' by necessite condicionel 4440
I wol not' haue to doone of' such matiere
My tale is of' a cokk' as 3e schuln aft*er* heere
That' took' his counseil of' his wyf' wiþ sorwe
To walke in-to þe 3erd vppon þe morwe 4444
That' he had mette þe dreem as I 3ou tolde
Wo*m*mens counseiles ben ful ofte colde
Wo*m*mans counseil brought' vs ferst' to wo
And made ad*a*m fro p*ar*adys to go 4448
þer as he was ful mery and wel at' ese /
But' for I not' whom it' might' displese [leaf 253, back]
If' I councel of' wo*m*men wolde blame
Passe ouer I seyde it' in my game 4452
Rede auctours wher þey trete of' such matiere
And what' þay sein of' wo*m*men 3e may heere
These ben þe cokkes wordes and nought myne
I can non harme of' no wo*m*man devyne 4456
ffayre in þe sande to baþe hire merily
liþ pertelote and all*e* hire sustres by
A3ein þe sonne and Chaunteclere so fre
Sange meriere þan þe mere-mayde in þe see 4460
ffor Physyalogus saiþ witterly
How þat' þey sungen wel and merily
And so bifelle as he cast' his ye
amonges þe wortes vpon a butterflye 4464
He was war of' þis ffox þat' lay ful lowe
¶ No þing' ne luste him þanne for to crowe
But' cryed anon kok' kok' and vp he sterte
As man þat' was affrayed in his herte 4468
ffor naturelly a beste desireþ to fle
ffro his contrarye if' he may it' se
þey he neuer hadde seye it erst' wiþ his ye
This Chaunteclere when he gan him espye 4472

he wolde han fledde but þat þe fox anon
Sayde gentil sire allas what wol ȝe doon
Been ȝe affrayed of me þat am ȝoure freende
Certes sire þen be ȝe vnheende 4476
If I to ȝou wolde harme or vilanye
I am nought come ȝoure councel to aspie
But trewely þe cause of my comynge
Was oonly to herkne how þat ȝe synge / 4480
ffor trewely ȝe han as mery a steuene
As any aungel haþ þat is in heuene
Ther-with ȝe han in Physike more felynge
þat hadde boys or eny þat can synge 4484
My lord ȝoure fader god his soule blesse
And eek ȝoure mooder of hire gentilnesse [leaf 254]
han in my*n* hous I-ben ful wel at eese
and certes sire ful fayn wolde I ȝou pleese 4488
But for men speken of syngyng I wolde seye
So mote I brouke myne eyen tweye
Saue ȝou I ne herde neuer man so synge
As dide ȝoure fader in þe morwenynge 4492
Certes it was of herte al þat he sange
And for to make his voys þe more strange
He wolde so peyne him þat wiþ boþe his eyen
He moste wynke so lowde he dide cryen 4496
And standen on his typtoos þer-wiþ-al
And strecche forþ his nekke long and smal
And eek he was of such discrecioñ
That þer was no man in no regioñ 4500
That him in song or wisdam mighte passe
I haue wel rad daun burnell*e* th*e* asse
Among his vers þer was a kok
ffor a prestes sone ȝaf him a knok 4504
Vpon his legges whil he was yong and nyce
He made him for to leese his benefice
But certein þer is no comp*ar*isoñ
Betwixe þe wisdam and discrecioñ 4508

Of' ȝoure fader and of' his subtilte
Now syngeþ sire for seinte Charite
Let' see conne ȝe ȝoure fader countrefete
þis Chaunteclere his wynges gan to bete 4512
As man þat' couþe his tresoñ not' aspye
So was he rauysschīt' wiþ his flaterye ¶ Nota bene
¶ Allas ȝe lordes many a fals flatour
Is in ȝoure Court' and many a losengour 4516
þat' pleasen ȝou more by my feiþ
Then he þat' soþfastnesse vnto ȝou seiþ
Redeþ ecclesiastre of' flaterie
Beþ war ȝe lordes of' here treccherie 4520
This Chaunteclere stood heye vpon his toos
Strecching' his necke and huld his eyen clos [leaf 254, back]
And gan to crowe lowde for þe nones
And daun Russel stert' vp al at' oones 4524
And by þe gargage hente Chaunteclere
And on his bak' toward the woode him bere
ffor ȝet' was þere noman þat' him sewed
O destyne þat' mayst not' ben eschewed 4528
Allas þat' Chaunteclere fel fro þe bemes
Allas his wyf' ne roughte nought' of' dremes
And on a friday fell*e* al þis meschaunce
O venus þat' art' goddesse of' plesa*u*nce 4532
Seþines þat þi s*er*uañt was þis Chaunteclere
And in þin s*er*uise dede al his powere /
More for delite þan þe world to multiplie
Why woldestow suffre him / on þin day to dye 4536
O Gaufrede deere maister sou*er*ayn
That' whan þy worþy king' Richard was slayn
Wiþ schotte compleynedest' his deþ so sore
Why ne hadde I now þin sentence and þin lore 4540
The friday for to chyde as deden ȝe /
ffor on a ffriday schortly slayn was he
þenne wolde I schewe ȝou how þat' I couþe pleyne
ffor Chaunteclere and for his peyne 4544

Certes such cry ne lamentacioñ
Was of ladyes maade whan yleoñ
Was wonne and Purris wiþ his streighte swerd
Whenne he hente king Pryam by þe berd 4548
And slayn him as seyde Enneydos
As maden alle þe hennes in þe cloos
Whan þey hadde seye of chaunteclere þe sight
But soueraynly dame Pertelote schright 4552
fful lowder þen dede hasdrubaldes wyff
Whan þat hire housbonde hadde lost his lyff
And þat þe Romayns had berud Cartage
Sche was so fulle of torment and of Rage 4556
þat wilfully in to þe fuyr sche sterte
And brend hir selue wiþ a stedefast herte [leaf 255]
O wofulle hennes right so cryede ȝe
As whan þat Nero brende þe Cite 4560
Of Rome cryden þe Senatours wyfes
ffor þat here housbondes schulde leese here lyues
Wiþouten gilte Nero haþ hem slayn
¶ Now wole I turne vnto my tale agayn 4564
This seely widewe and hire doughtres tuo
Herden þe hennes crien and make woo /
And out at þe dore sterten þay anon
And sawe þe fox toward þe groue goon 4568
And bar vpon his bak þe kok away
And cryden out harrow and weloway
A ha þe fox and after him þay ran
And eek with staues many anoþer man 4572
Ran colle oure dogge Talbot and Garlond
And Malkyn wiþ hire distaf in hire hond
Ran cow and calf and eek þe verrey hogges
Sore aferde for berkyng of þe dogges 4576
And schowtyng of men and of wommen eeke
þey ronne so her hert þey þought tobreeke
They yelleden as feendes don in helle
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle 4580

Out of þe huyues come þe swarm of bees
þe gees for feere flowen ouer þe trees
So hidous was þe noyse a *benedicite*
Certes he Iakke strawe and his meynee 4584
Ne maden neuere schoutes half so schrille
Whan þat þay wolden eny flemyng kille
As þat ilke day was maad vpon þe ffox
Of bras þey broughte beemes and of Box 4588
Of horne and boon in whiche þey pouped
And þer-wiþal þey schriched and þey schouted
It semed as þat heuen schulde fall*e*
Now goode men I p*ray* ȝou herkneþ all*e* 4592
Lo how fortune turneþ sodeinly
The hope and eek þe pruyde of here enuye [leaf 255, back]
This Cok þat lay vpon þis foxes bak
In all*e* his drede vnto þe fox he spak 4596
And sayde sire if I were as ȝe
ȝet schuld I say as wis god helpe me
Turneþ aȝein ȝe proude cherles all*e*
A verray pestilence vpon ȝou fall*e* 4600
Now am I come vnto þis woodes syde
Maugre ȝour heed þe cok schal here abyde
I wole him ete in feiþ and þat anon
The ffox answerde in feiþ it schal be don 4604
and [as] he spak þat word al sodeinly
This Cok brak fro his mouþ delyuerly
An heigh vpon a tree he fleigh anoon
And whan þe fox saugh þat he was goon 4608
Allas q*uod* he O Chaunteclere allas
I haue q*uod* he don to ȝow a trespas
In als moche as I made ȝou afferd
When I ȝou hente and brought out of þe ȝerd 4612
But sire I dede it nought in no wicked entent
Come doun and I schal telle ȝou what I ment
I schal ȝou seye soþ god helpe me so /
Nay þanne q*uod* he I schrewe vs boþe tuo / 4616

And ferst I schrewe my self bope blood and bones
If þou begile me ofter þan ones /
Thou schalt nomore wiþ þin flaterye
Do me to synge and wynke wiþ my*n* ye 4620
ffor he þat wynkeþ whan he schulde se
As wisly god let him neuer þe
Nay q*uod* þe fox god ȝiue him meschaunce
That is so vndiscret of gouerna*u*nce 4624
þat iangleþ whan he schulde haue pees
Lo suche it is for to be recheles /
and necligent and trusteþ on flaterye
But ȝe þat halden þis tale a folye 4628
As of a fox and of a cok and an hen
Takeþ þe moralite goode men [leaf 256]
ffor seint poule saiþ / alle þat writen is
To oure doctrine / it is y-writen y-wis 4632
Takeþ þe fruit/ and leteþ þe chaff be stille
Now goode god if þat it be þin wille /
As seiþ my lord so make vs alle goode men
And bringe vs alle to his heihe blisse ameN 4636

Here endeþ þe Nonne p*r*estes tale

GROUP H. FRAGMENT IX.

§ 1. THE MANCIPLE'S HEAD-LINK.

CORPUS MS.

[*on leaf* 256] Here folweþ þe P*ro*loge of þe mañ-
¶ ciples tale Ca^m^ xxiij^m^

WOt ȝe not wher þer stant/ a litel toun
Which þat is cleped Bobbe vp and do*un*
vnder þe Blee in Caunt*er*bery way
Ther gan oure Oste for to Iape and play 4
And sayde syres what donne is in þe myre
Is no man for preyer ne for huyre
That wole awake oure felawe be-hynde /
A þeef might him ful lightly robbe and bynde 8
Se how he nappeþ se for goddes bones
þat he wol falle fro his hors at ones
Is þat a Cook of londoñ wiþ meschañce
Do him come forth he knoweþ his penãnce 12
ffor he schal telle a tale by my fey
Al þough it be nought worþ a botel hey
Awake þou Cook q*uod* he god ȝiue þe sorwe
What eyleþ þe to slepe by þe morwe 16
hast þou had fleen al night or art þou drunke
Or hast þou wiþ som quene al night y-swunke
So þat þou mayst nought holden vp þin heed
This Cook þat was ful pale and no þing reed 20
Seyde oure Ost so god my soule blesse
As þer is falle on me such heuynesse
Not I nouȝt why me were leuer to slepe
Then þe beste galoñ of wyn in Chepe 24

Wel q*uod* þe maunciple if' it' þe may don ese 25
To þe s*ir* Cook' and to no wight' displese
Which þat' heer rydeþ in þis companye /
And þat' oure host' wole of' his curtesye 28
I wole as now excuse þe of' þin tale [leaf 256, back]
ffor in good feiþ þi visage is ful pale
Thin eyen dasewen soþly as me þinkeþ
And wel I woot' þi breþ ful soure stinkeþ 32
That' scheweþ wel þou art' nought' wel disposed
Of' me certeyn þou schalt' nought' ben y-glosed
Se how he goneth lo his drunken wight'
As þough he wolde vs swolwe anon right' 36
hald clos þin mouþ man by þyn fader kyn
The deuyl of' helle sette his foot' þ*er*in
This cursed breth wol infecte vs all*e*
ffy stynkynge swyn fy foule mote þe fall*e* 40
Takeþ heede sires of' þis lusty man
Now sweete sire wole ȝe iuste at' þe van
Ther-to me þenkeþ ȝe ben wel y-schape
I trowe þat' ȝe haue drunken wyn ape 44
And þat' is whan men pleye wiþ a straw /
And wiþ his speche þe Cooke wax al wraw
And on þe maunciple bygan he nodde faste
ffor lakke of' speche and doun þe hors him caste 48
Wher as he lay til þat' men him vp took'
This was a fayr Chiuacheef' of' a cook'
Allas he ne hadde holde him by his ladel
And er þat' he aȝein were in his sadel 52
Ther was a gret' schowuyng' boþe to and fro
To lifte him vp and mochil care and woo
So vnweldy was þis sely pallede goste
And to þe maunciple þenne spak' oure Oste 56
By cause þat' drynke haþ dominacioñ
Vpon þis man by my Sauacioñ
I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale
ffor were it' wyn or olde or moysty ale 60

That' he haþ drunke he spekeþ so in his nose / 61
And fneseþ faste and eek' he haþ þe pose
he hath also to don more þan ynough
To kepe him and his capel out' of' þe slough̄ 64
And if' he falle fro his capil eft' sone / [leaf 257]
Thenne schulle we alle haue ynough to doone
In liftyng' vp his heuy drunken cors
Telle on þin tale of' him make I no fors 68
But' ȝit' mauncipie in feiþ þou art' to nyce
Thus openly to reproue him of' his vice
Anoþ*er* day he wole p*er*auenture
Reclayme þe and bringen þe to lure 72
I mene he speke wole of' smale þinges
And for to pynchen at' þine rekenynges
That' were not' honeste if' it' come to pref'
No q*uod* þe mauncipie þat' were a gret' meschief' 76
So miḡht' he bringe me in to þe snare
Yet' hadde I leuer payen for þe mare
Which he ryt' on þan he schulde wiþ me stryue
I wol not' wrapþe him so mote I þryue 80
þat' þat' I spak' I seyde it' in my bourde
And wite ȝe wel I haue heer in my gourde
A drauḡht' of' wyn ye of' a rype grape
And right' anon ȝe schullen seen a good Iape 84
This Cook' schal drynke þer-of' if' I may
vp peyne of' my lyf' he wol not' say nay
And certeinly to tellen as it/ was
Of' þis vesseH̄ þe Cook' drank' faste allas 88
What' needeþ it' he drank' ynough̄ aforn
And whan he hadde pouped in his horn
To þe mauncipie he took' þe gourde again
And of' þat' drynke þe cook' was wonder fayn 92
And þanked him in such wise as he cowde
Then gan oure Oste to lawhe wonder lowde
And sayde I se wel it' is necessarie
Where þat' we goon good drink' wiþ vs to carie 96

ffor þat wol tourne rancour and disese 97
To acord and loue and many a word to peese
O Bachus y-blessed be þy name
þat so canst torne ernest in to game 100
Worschipe and þonke be to þy deite [leaf 257, back]
Of þat matiere ne gete ȝe nomore of me
Tel on þi tale þou mañciple I þe preye
Wel sire q*uod* he now kerkneþ what I seye ¶ Explic*it* p*rolog*us

[*on leaf* 257, *back*] Incip*it*ᵗ fab*u*la

Whan phebus dwelde heer in þis erþe adoun
As olde booke maken mencio*un* 106
he was þe moste lusty bachiler
Of/ alle þe world and eekᵗ þe bestᵗ archeer
he sloughh Phytoñ þe se*r*pent/ as he lay
Slepyngᵗ agayn þe sonne vpon a day
And many anoþ*er* noble worþy dede /
He wiþ his bowe broughht as men nowe rede 112
Pleyen he couþe ofᵗ eu*er*y menstralcye
And syngen þatᵗ it was a melodye
To heeren ofᵗ his cleere voys þe soun
Certes þe kingᵗ ofᵗ Thebes amphyo*un* 116
Thatᵗ wiþ his syngyngᵗ walled þatᵗ Cite
Cowde neu*er* syngen halfᵗ so wel as he
Therto he was þe semlyeste man
þatᵗ is or was siþen þe world bygan 120
Whatᵗ needeþ itᵗ his fetures to discryue
ffor in þis world was non so fair on lyue
he was þer-wiþ fulfild ofᵗ gentilnesse
Ofᵗ honour and of p*ar*fyte worþinesse 124
This Phebus þatᵗ was flour ofᵗ Bachelrye
As wel in freedam as in Chiualrie
ffor disporte in signe eekᵗ ofᵗ victorie
Ofᵗ Phytoñ so as telleþ vs þe storye 128
Was worþy to beren in his hond a bowe /
Now hadde þis Phebus in his hous a crowe
Which in a cage he fostred many a day
And taughtᵗ itᵗ speke as þatᵗ men teche a Iay 132

Whit' was þis Crowe as is a snow whit' swan 133
And countrefeted þe speche of' euery man
he cowde when he schulde telle a tale
Ther-wiþ in al þe world no nightyngale 136
Ne couþe by an hundred þousend deel [leaf 258]
Syngen so wonderly meryly and weel
Now hadde þis Phebus in his hous a wyf'
Which þat' he loued more þan his owne lyf' 140
And nigħt' and day dyd euer his diligence
Hir for to plese and don hire reuerence
Saue oonly if' þe soþ þat' I schal sayn
Gelous he was and wolde haue kept' hire fayn 144
ffor him were loþ by-Iaped for to be
And so euery wigħt' in such degre
But' al for nouȝt' for it' auayleþ nouȝt'
A good wyff' þat is clene of' werk' and þougħt 148
Schulde nought' be kepte in non awayte certain
And trewely þe labour is in vayn
To kepe a schrewe for it wol nouȝt' be
This halde I for a verray nycete 152
To spille labour for to keepe wyues
Thus writen olde Clerkes in here lyues
But' now to purpos as I first' bigan
This worþy Phebus doþ al þat' he can 156
To plesen hyre wenyng' by such plesañce
And for his manhode and his gouernañce
That' no man schulde haue put him fro hir grace
But' god it' woot/ þer may no man enbrace 160
As to distreyne a þing' which þat nature
Haþ naturelly sette in a creature
Take eny bryd and put it' in a kage
And do al þin entent and þy corage 164
To fostre it tendrely wiþ mete and drinke
Of' alle deyntees þat' þou canst' byþinke
And keepe it/ also clenly as þou may
Al þough his cage of' golde be neuer so gay 168

ȝet' haþ þis bridde by .xx. þousand folde 169
Leuer in a fforest' þat' is wilde and colde
Gon ete wormes and such wrecchedenesse
ffor euer þis bridde wol doon his busynesse 172
To eskape out' of' his cage when he may [leaf 258, back]
his liberte þe bridde desireþ ay
Let' take a catte and fostre him wel wiþ melk'
An tendre fleissch̄ and make his couche of' selk' 176
And let' him seen a mous go by þe wall*e*
And anon he weyueþ milke fleissche and all*e*
And eu*er*y deynte þat' is in þat' hous
Such appetyt' haþ sche to ete a mous 180
Lo he[*re*] haþ luste his dampnacioñ
And appetyt' flemyth discrecioñ
As þe wolf' haþ also a vyleyns kynde
The lewedeste wolf' þat' sche may fynde 184
Of' lest' of' reputacioñ þat' wol sche take
In tyme whan hire luste to haue a make
All*e* þise ensamples speke I by þese men
That' ben vntrewe and noþing' by wo*m*men 188
ffor men han eu*er*e a likerous appetyt'
On lowere þing' to parforme here delyt'
Then on here wyfes ben þay neuer so fayre
Ne neuer so trewe ne so debonaire 192
ffleissche is so newefongul wiþ meschañce
That' we ne konne in no þing' han plesañce
That' sowneþ in to vertu eny while
This Phebus which þat' þought' vpon no gile 196
Desceyued was for all*e* his Iolite
ffor vnder him anoþer hadde sche
A man of' litel reputacioñ
Nought' worþ to Phebus in comparisoñ 200
The more harm it' is it' happeþ ofte so
Of' which þer comeþ mochil harme and wo
And so bifell*e* whan Phebus was absent'
His wif' anon haþ for hir le*m*man sent' 204

Hire le*m*man certes þis is a kauissch speche 205
fforȝiueþ it me and þat I ȝou beseche
The wyse Plato saiþ as ȝe may rede
þe worde moot need acorde wiþ þe dede 208
ȝif men schal telle p*ro*prely a þing [leaf 259]
The word moot/ cosyn be to þe workyng
I am a boystous man riht þus say I
Ther is no difference trewely 212
Betwix a wyf þat is of heih degre
If of hire body dishoneste sche be
And a pouere wenche othir þan þis
If it so be þey werke boþe amys 216
But þat þe gentil is in staat aboue
Sche schal be cleped his lady as in loue
And for þat oþer is a pouer wo*m*man
Sche schal be cleped his wenche or his lem̄man 220
And god it woot my*n* owne deere bro*þer*
Men leyn þat oon as lowe as liþ þat o*þer*
Right so betwixe a titles tyraunt
And an outlawe or a þeef erraunt 224
The same I say þer is no difference /
To alisaundre was tolde þis sentence /
That for þe tyraunt is of grettere migh̄t
By force of meyne for to sleen do*u*n right 228
And brenne hous and home and make al playn
Lo þ*er*fore is he cleped a Capitayn
¶ And for þe outlawe haþ but smal meigne
And may not doon so gret an harm as he 232
Ne bringe a Contre to so gret mescheef
Men clepen him an outlawe or a þeef
But for I am a man not texted wel
I wol not telle of Tytus neuer a deel 236
I wol go to my tale as I began
Whan Phebus [wyf] hadde sent for hire le*m*man
Anon þey wroughten all*e* here lust volage
This white crowe þat heng ay in þe kage 240

Bihelde hire werk' and seyde neuer a word 241
And whan þat home was come Phebus þe lord
This crowe sange cokkow cokkow cokkow
What' bryd q*uo*þ Phebus what' song' syngest' þou 244
Ne were þou wont' so meryly to synge [leaf 259, back]
þat' to my*n* herte it' was a reioisschinge
To here þi voys allas what' song' is þis
By god q*uod* he I synge nought amys 248
Phebus q*uod* he for al þi worþinesse
ffor all*e* þy beaute and þyn gentilnesse
ffor all*e* þi song' and al þi menstralcye
ffor al þi waytyng' blered is þin ye 252
Wiþ on of' litel reputacioñ
Nought' worþ to þe as in comparisoñ
þe mountañce of' a gnatte so mote I þriue
ffor on þy bed þy wyff / I say him swyne 256
What' wole ȝe more þe crowe anon him tolde
By sadde tokenes and by wordes bolde
How þat' his wyf' hadde doon hire leccherie
him to gret' schame and to gret' vilanye 260
And tolde him ofte he say it' wiþ his eyen
þis Phebus gan awayward for to wryen
him þought' his sorwful herte brast a tuo /
His bowe he bente and sette þ*er*-Inne a floo 264
And in his Ire þan haþ he his wif' y-slayn
This is þeffecte þer is nomore to sayn
ffor sorwe of' which he brak' his mynstralcye
Boþe harpe and lewte gyterne and Sawterye 268
And eek' he brak' his arwes and his bowe
And after þat' þus spak' he to þe crowe
Traytour q*uod* he wiþ tonge of' Scorpioñ
Thou hast' me brought to my confusioñ 272
Allas þat' I was wrought' why nere I ded
O deere wyf' o gemme of' lustyhed
That' were to me so sadde and eek' so trewe
Now lyes þou deed wiþ face pale of' hewe / 276

fful gulteles þat durst I swere ywys 277
O rakel hound to don so foule amys
O trouble witte .O. Ire recheles
That vnauysed smytest gulteles / 280
O wan-truste ful of fals suspecioñ [leaf 260]
Where was þy witte and þi discrecioñ
O eu*er*y man be war of rekelnesse
Ne trowe noþing wiþouten strong witnesse 284
Smyt nouȝt to sone er þat þou wite why
And be auysed wel and soburly
Or ȝe doon eny execucioñ
Vpon ȝoure Ire for suspecioñ 288
Allas a þousand folk han rakel Ire.
ffully fordoon or brought hem in þe myre
Allas for sorwe I wil my selue slee
And to þe crowe O false þeef sayde he 292
I wol þe quyte anon þy false tale
þou songe whilom lyk a nightyngale
Now schalt þou false þeef þi song forgon
Eeke þin white feþeres euerichon 296
Ne neuer in all*e* þi lyue schalt þou speke
Thus schal men on a traitour ben awreke
Thou and þin hospreinge euere schuln be blake
Ne neuere swete noyse schul ȝe make / 300
But euer crye agayn tempest and reyn
In toknyng þat þurgh þe my wyf was slayn
And to þe crowe he sterte and þat anon
And pulled his white feþeres eu*er*ychon 304
and made him blak and reft him all*e* his song
And eek his speche and out at þe dore him slong
vnto þe deuel which I him betake /
And for þis caas ben all*e* crowes blake 308
Lordynges by þis ensample I ȝou preye
Beþ war and takeþ keepe what þat ȝe seye
Ne telleþ neuer no man in ȝour lyff/
how þat anoþ*er* man haþ dight his wyf 312

He wole ȝow haten mortelly certein 313
Daun Salomon as wise clerkes sein
Techeþ a man to kepe his tonge wel
But as I sayde I am nought text wel 316
But naþeles þus taughte me my dame [leaf 260, back]
My sone þenk on þe crowe a goddes name
My sone keepe wel þi tonge and kepe þy frende
A wikked tonge is worse þan a feende 320
My sone ffrom a feend men may hem blesse
My sone god of his endeles goodnesse /
Walled a tonge wiþ teeþ and lippes eeke
ffor man schulde him auyse what he speeke 324
My sone ful ofte for to mochel speche
haþ many a man be spilt as clerkes teche
But for litel speche auysily
Is no man schent to speke gen*er*ally 328
My sone þy tonge schuldest þou restreigne
At alle tyme but whan þou dost þy peyne
To speke of god in honour and preyere
The ferste vertu sone if þou wolt lere 332
Is to restreyne and kepe wel þi tunge
þus lernen children whanne þey ben ȝonge
My sone of mochel spekyng euel auysed
Ther lasse spekyng hadde ynough suffised 336
Comeþ mochil harm þus was me told and taught
In mochil speche synne wanteþ naught
Wostow wher-of a rakil tonge serueþ
Right as a swerd forkutteþ and forkerueþ 340
An arm a tuo my deere sone right so
A tunge kutteþ frendschipe al a tuo
A ianglere is to god abhominable /
Rede Salamon so wys and honorable / 344
Rede Dauyd and his psalmys red senekke
My sone speek nought but wiþ þin heed þou bekke
Dissimule as þou were defe if þat þou heere
A Iangler speke of p*er*ilous mateere / 348

þe flemyng' saiþ and lerne it if' þe leste 349
þat lytel Iangelynge causeþ mechel reste
My sone if' þou no wickede word hast' seyd
þe þar nouȝt' drede for to be bywreyd 352
But' he þat' haþ myssayd I dar wel sayn [leaf 261]
he may by no way clepe his word agayn
Thing' þat' is sayde is sayde and forþ it' goþ
Though him repente or be him neuer so loþ 356
he is his þralle to whom þat' he haþ sayd
A tale of' which he is now yuele payd
My sone be war and be nouȝt auctour newe
Of tydynges wheþer þay ben fals or trewe 360
Wher so þou come amonges heihe or lowe
Kepe wel þy tunge and þenk' vpon þe crowe Explicit'
fabula mancipii

GROUP I. FRAGMENT X.

§ 1. THE BLANK-PARSON LINK.

[*This is really a link between some unwritten Tale and the Parson's. It has been made into the Manciple-Parson Link (or Yeoman-Parson by the Christ-Church MS) by Chaucer's copiers, though not meant for it.*]

CORPUS MS.

Here bygynneþ þe prologe of^t þe p*ar*soñ [*on leaf* 261]

By þat^t þe maunciple hadde his tale ended Ca^m xxiiij^m
The sonne fro þe souþ syde is descended
So lowe þat^t he was nought^t to my sight̃
Degrees xxix as of^t highte / 4
Ten of^t þe clokke it^t was so as I gesse /
ffor xj foote a lytel more or lesse
My schadwe was at^t þilke tyme as þere /
Of^t suche feet^t as my lengþe parted were / 8
In six foote equal of^t p*ro*porcioñ
Ther-wiþ þe mones exaltacioñ
I mene libra alwey gan ascende
As we were entryng^t at^t a thropes ende 12
ffor wiþ oure Oste as he was wont^t to gye
As in þis caas oure ioly companye /
Sayde in þis wise lordynges eu*er*ychon
Now lakkeþ vs no tale more þan oon 16
ffulfild is my sentence and my degre
Who wile now telle a tale let^t se
Almost^t fulfilled is my*n* ordynaunce
I p*ray* to god so ȝiue him right̃^t good chañce 20
þat^t telleþ þis tale to vs lustely
Sire prest^t q*uod* he art^t þou a vicary
Or art^t þou a p*er*soñ say soþ by þy fey
Be what^t þou be ne breke nought^t oure pley 24

ffor eu*er*y man saue þou haþ told his tale 25
vnbokele and schewe vs what is in þy male [leaf 261, back]
ffor trewely me þenkeþ by þy cheere
Thou scholdest knette vp wel a gret matiere 28
Telle vs a fable anon for cokkes bones
This p*er*soñ answered al at oones
Thou getest fable non y-tolde for me
ffor Poule þat writeþ vnto Thimothe 32
Repreueþ hem þat wayuen soþfastnesse
And tellen fables and such wrecchednesse
Whi schulde I schewen draff out of my feste /
Whan I may schewen whete if þat me leste 36
ffor which I saye if þat þou luste to heere
Moralite and v*er*tuous matiere
And þenne þat ȝe woln ȝiue me audience
I wol ful fayn at cristes reuerence / 40
Don ȝou plesaunce lefful as I can
But trusteþ wel I am a sothryn man
I can nought geste rom ram ruf by lettre
Ne god wot rym holde I but lytel bettre 44
And þ*er*fore if ȝou luste I wol nought glose
I wol ȝou telle a mery tale in prose
To knitte vp al þis feste an ende
And ih*es*u for his grace witte me sende 48
To schewe ȝou þe wey in þis visage
Of þilke p*ar*fyt glorious pilgrimage
That highte Ier*usal*em Celestial
And if ȝe vouche sauf anon ȝe schal 52
Bygynne vpon my tale for which I preye
Telle ȝoure avis I can no bettre seye
But naþeles þis meditacioñ
I putte it ay vnder correctioñ 56
Of clerkes for I am nought text wel
I take but þe sentence trustel wel
þerfore I make protestacioñ
That I wol stonde to correctioñ 60

GROUP I. § 1. BLANK-PARSON LINK. **Corpus MS.**

Vppon þis word we han assented sone [*a leaf cut out of the Corpus MS*]
[for as hit semed / hit was for to doone [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14, *leaf* 268]
to enden / in som v*er*tuous sentence
and for to yeve him space / *and* audience 64
and bad oure Oste / he shulde to him say
that alle we / to telle his tale him pray
oure Oste had the wordes / for vs alle
sir prest q*uo*d he / now faire yow befalle 68
sey what yow luste / *and* we wol gladly here
and with that worde / he seide in this manere
telleth q*uo*d he / youre meditaciouñ
but hasteth yow / the sonne wol a-douñ 72
beth fructuous / *and* that in litel space
and to do wel / god sende yow his grace.
Here endith the p*ar*son his prolog] [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14 *extract stops*]

REESE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

THE PARSON'S TALE.

A TREATISE ON PENITENCE, IN 3 PARTS:

Part I. On **Penitence**, and its 1st requisite **Contrition** (**A**) (p. 593—612).
Part II. On its 2nd requisite, **Confession** (**B**) (p. 612—679).
Part III. On its 3rd requisite, **Satisfaction** (**C**) (p. 679—684), with the Writer's Leave-taking and Retractations (p. 684-85).

PART I. (p. 593—612).

ON PENITENCE, AND ITS 1ST REQUISITE, CONTRITION.

Proem on Jeremiah vi. 16. The Tale is to be on *Penitence* as a full noble way to lead folk to Christ, and is to treat of
- i. 'what is Penitence' (p. 594).
- ii. 'whennes it is cleped Penitence'. [*not in the Tale.*]
- iii. 'in how manye maneres been the accio*u*ns or werkynges of Penitence' (p. 594-5).
- iv. 'how many speces ther been of Penitence' (p. 595).
- v. 'whiche thynges ap*er*tenen and bihouen to Penitence' (p. 595—682: nearly all Parts I and III, and all Part II).
- vi. 'whiche thynges destourbe*n* Penitence' (at end of Part III, p. 682) (p. 593).

i. **Penitence** defined, by *a.* St Ambrose; *b.* 'som doctour'; *c.* the writer. Its requisites: 1. bewailing of sins; 2. purpose to have shrift, to do satisfaction, never to sin again, to continue in good works (p. 594).

[ii. *not given.*]

iii. The 3 actions of Penitence: 1. Baptism after sin; 2. not to do deadly sin after baptism; 3. not thus to do venial sin (p. 594-95).

iv. The 3 speces or kinds of Penitence: 1. Solemn (to be put out of church, or do open penance); 2. Common (to go naked on pilgrimage); 3. Private (p. 595).

v. The 3 necessities or requisites for Penitence (p. 596—682):
- **A. Contrition of heart** (p. 596—612).
- **B. Confession of mouth** (Part II, p. 612—679).
- **C Satisfaction** (Part III, p. 679—682).

Penitence avails against 3 things, by which we wrath Christ (p. 595).

A. Contrition is the root of Penitence, whose stem bears branches and leaves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaction.

Contrition also bears a seed of grace, whose heat draws men to God. (Simile of the child and his nurse's milk.)

Penance is the tree of life (p. 596).

Four Points to be known about Contrition:
1. What it is; 2. the causes that move a man to it; 3. how to be contrite; 4. what it avails the soul (p. 597).

2. The 6 Causes that should move a man to Contrition:
- *a.* Remembrance of Sins (p. 597-8).
- *b.* Whoso does sin is the Thrall of Sin (p. 598-99).
- *c.* Dread of the Day of Doom and the Pains of Hell (p. 599—604). These described: the Doom (p. 599-600); Job's 'lond of mysese and of derknesse' (p. 600-1); the 3 shames in hell against (1) 'Honours, (2) delices, and (3) richesses' (p. 611); poverty in 4 things: no treasure, food, clothing, or friends (p. 602); and no delights of the 5 senses. The pain shall be eternal (p. 603). Hell is orderless (p. 603-4). The 7 causes why the damnd have lost all hope (p. 604).
- *d.* Remembrance of the good works we've left undone, and the loss of the good works done while we were in sin (p. 604-6). Deadly sin wipes out all good works formerly done (p. 605); and no good works can be done in deadly sin (p. 605-6). The new French song, *J'ai tout perdu mon temps* (also quoted in Chaucer's late poem of *Fortune*).

e. Remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins (p. 606). In man's sin, every ordinance is turnd up-so-down (p. 607). For this disorder Christ sufferd (p. 608).

f. The hope of 3 things: 1. Forgiveness of Sins, 2. the Gift of Grace to do well, 3. the Glory of Heaven (p. 609).

3. How to be contrite. Contrition must be universal and total: for sins of thought, for desires against God's law, for wicked words as well as wicked deeds (p. 610). Contrition must be angwishous and continual (p. 609-11).

4. How Contrition helps the soul. It sometimes delivers a man from sin; destroys the prison of hell; cleanses the soul; changes the son of Wrath to the son of Grace (p. 611-12).

PART II (*no.* v. *continued*).

B. CONFESSION (THE 2ND REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 612—679).

B. Confession. § 1. (l. 317) 'what is confession' (p. 612).
§ 2. 'wheither it oghte nedes be doon or noon' (p. 672-9).
§ 3. 'whiche thynges been couenable to verray Confession' (p. 674-79).

CONFESSION, § 1.

1. 'Confession is verray shewynge of synnes to the preest' (l. 318) (p. 612). We must understand too
a. (l. 321) 'whennes that synnes spryngen' (p. 612—15).
b. 'how they encreessen' (p. 615-16; 672-74).
c. 'whiche they been' (p. 616--672).

1.*a.* Sin sprang from the fall of Adam (p. 612). The legend of Adam and Eve told (p. 613). From Adam we took Original Sin, and were born sons of eternal damnation; but Baptism rescues us; though we keep liability to temptation, or Concupiscence (p. 613-14).

Concupiscence, or the nourishing and occasion of sin. St Paul and St Jerome's temptations (p. 614-15).

1.*b.* How Sin grows in a man. 1. by Concupiscence; 2. Subjection to the Devil; 3. Hesitation; 4. Doing, the Sin becoming Actual (p. 615-16).

1.*c.* Sin is *α.* venial, *β.* deadly (or mortal).
α. 1. Venial Sin defined. It skips into Deadly Sin. (Simile of the drops of water into a vessel's hold drowning the ship;) (p. 616).
β. 1. Deadly Sin defined (p. 617).
α. 2. Of divers small venial sins, hardly thought sins (p. 617-18); eating, drinking, talking, too much; using your wife too much; not visiting the sick (p. 617); talking vanities at church, &c. (p. 618). Cure of venial sins by love to Christ, prayer, confession, good works, receiving the Sacrament, holy-water, &c. (p. 618).

1.*c.* *β.* 2. *The Seven Deadly Sins.* The Chieftains, head and spring, of all other Sins (p. 619).
i. Pride (p. 619-26), and its Remedy (p. 626-8).
ii. Envy (p. 628-30), and its Remedy (p. 630-1).
iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its Remedy (p. 642-5).
iv. Accidie or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), and its Remedy (p. 650-1).
v. Avarice or Covetousness (p. 651-7), and its Remedy (p. 657-8).
vi. Gluttony (p. 658-9), and its Remedy (p. 660).
vii. Lechery (p. 660-8), and its Remedy (p. 668-72).

i. PRIDE (p. 619—626). Its 16 (and more) Twigs. 1. Disobedience, 2. Boasting, 3. Hypocrisy, 4. Despite, 5. Arrogance (p. 619), 6. Impudence, 7. Swelling of Heart (rejoicing in harm done), 8. Insolence, 9. Elation, 10. Impatience, 11. Contumacy, 12.

Presumption, 13. Irreverence, 14. Pertinacity, 15. Vain-glory, 16. Jangling (chattering).

A private kind of pride (the Host's Wife's and Wife of Bath's[1]), wanting to go to offering first, &c. (p. 620).

Two kinds of Pride, *a.* 'within man's heart', *b.* without; *b.* being the sign of *a.*, 'as the gaye leefsel atte Taverne is sign of the wyn that is in the Celer'[2] (p. 620-21), *b.* outside pride.

a. in dear clothing, 1. superfluity of it: its cost, furring, chisel-holes, dragging in the dung, waste of material (p. 621), unfitness for giving to the poor: 2. scantness of it: showing men's privy members, and buttocks (like a she-ape's rump), and the former as half-flayd, in parti-colourd hose[3]. The 'outrageous array of Women' (p. 623).

β. in horses (p. 623), and vicious grooms to tend 'em; plate-harness, &c.

γ. in household: keeping too many retainers or servants, who oppress the poor (p. 624).

δ. in table: not asking the poor to feasts; having burning and ornamented dishes[4]; too costly cups, &c., and too choice minstrelsy (p. 624).

What Pride sins are deadly, and what venial (p. 624).

The Sources of Pride (p. 624): goods of Nature, Fortune, Grace (p. 624). The Folly of Pride in any of these goods of Nature: 'we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder, and . . of o nature'[5]. The general signs of *Gentleness.* (The flies calld 'bees', and their stingless king) (p. 625); 3 gifts of Grace; 3 of Fortune. The brittleness of popular praise[6] (p. 626).

The Remedy against Pride.

Humility or Meekness, and its 3 kinds: in 1. heart, 2. mouth, 3. works. 4 kinds of each of these (p. 626-27).

ii. Envy (p. 627-30): defined by the Philosopher and St Augustine. It springs from Malice (p. 627).

Malice; 2 kinds of: 1. hardness of heart, or recklessness; 2. opposing truth (p. 627).

The 2 kinds of Envy (p. 628): 1. sorrow at other men's prosperity; 2. joy at other men's harm: whence comes

Backbiting; 5 kinds (p. 628): 1. praise with a *but* at the end; 2. turning well-meant things upside down to ill ones; 3. lessening a neighbour's goodness; 4. putting one man above another; 5. glad listening to scandal (p. 628).

Grudging or murmuring (p. 628): 1. against God (p. 629); 2. Murmuring from avarice, 3. from pride, 4. from envy; 5. among Servants, who say 'the Devil's *Paternoster*'; 6. Murmuring from ire or hate: thence, *a.* Bitterness of Heart, *b.* Discord, *c.* Scorning; *d.* Accusing (p. 629); *e.* Malignity (p. 630).

The Remedy against Envy (p. 630-31).

Love of God and one's neighbour. How a man shall love his neighbour. How an enemy is included in the name 'neighbour' (p. 630). 3 Remedies of Love, against 3 deeds of Hate (p. 631). Love is the medicine that casts out the venom of Envy from man's heart (p. 631).

iii. Ire or Anger (p. 631-42), and its 2 kinds: *a.* good Ire or Wrath (p. 632); *b.* wicked Ire, and its 2 kinds: sudden ire, and ire of malice aforethought (p. 632-33).

Three Shrews that forge in the Devil's furnace: Pride, Envy, and Contumely (p. 633).

[1] Melibe-Monk Link, B. § 11; and General Prologue, A.

[2] Chaucer's father no doubt had a sign outside his wine-shop or tavern in Thames Street, London.

[3] The outspoken and somewhat coarse abuse of the new fashions in dress is a great change from Chaucer's admirable Third-Period chaff of the moral short-comings of the monks and friars, &c., in the Prologue and middle Tales. If this is not change of man, it's change of mood.

[4] Chaucer must have seen plenty of these when he was page, valet, and squire.

[5] Compare Chaucer's *Gentleness*, &c. [6] Compare Clerk's Tale, Part VI, st. 135.

Wrath takes away a man's wit and spiritual life (p. 634).
Fruits of Wrath: 1. Hate. 2. War and wrong. 3. Manslaughter, *a.* spiritual; *b.* bodily (p. 634).
a. The 3 kinds of spiritual Manslaughter (3, calld 6 in MSS. p. 634): 1. by Hate. 2. by Backbiting. 3. Giving wicked Counsel, by Fraud (p. 634).
b. bodily Manslaughter: slaying with your tongue, giving orders or counsel to slay a man (p. 634).
Manslaughter in deed: its 4 (that is, 7) kinds (p. 635): 1. by law: a Justice condemning a man to death; 2. justifiable homicide, in defence of one's own life; 3. by misadventure: shooting an arrow, &c.; 4. a woman overlying her child; 5. a man making a woman barren by drinks, &c., killing the fœtus within her, shedding his seed in the wrong place; a woman killing the child in her womb; 6. a woman killing her child (after birth) for shame; 7. a man by lechery or blows killing a fœtus.
(Sixteen) other sins coming from Ire or Anger.
1. blaming or despising God, as hazarders do (Cp. *Pardoner's Tale*) (p. 635); and those who treat of the Sacrament of the altar irreverently (p. 636).
2. Attry anger: making angry false excuses for sin.
3. Swearing, which dismembers Christ (p. 636).
a. Of lawful Swearing, before a Judge: its 3 conditions, and its motives; *b.* God's name and Christ's, not to be taken in vain (p. 637); *c.* swearing for gentility or manliness (p. 638); *d.* swearing suddenly; *e.* of Adjuration and Conjuration by enchanters and necromancers; *f.* of Divination by Dreams, &c.; *g.* of Charms for Wounds and Maladies (p. 638).
4. Lying (p. 638), and its 6 kinds.
5. Flattering. How Flatterers are the Devil's Nurses, his Enchanters and Chaplains (p. 639).
6. Cursing that comes of irous heart: Malison.
7. Chiding and Reproach (p. 640); (specially a chiding wife[1]) (p. 640-41).
8. Scorning (p. 641).
9. Giving wicked Counsel (p. 641).
10. Sowing and making Discord (p. 642).
11. Double tongue (p. 642).
12. Betraying of Counsel (p. 642).
13. Menace.
14. Idle words.
15. Jangling (chattering) (p. 642).
16. Japing (joking) (p. 642-43).

The Remedy against Anger (p. 643-5). Debonairtee and Patience (p. 643). Four kinds of grievances, and their remedies: 1. wicked words, 2. loss of goods, 3. harm of body, 4. outrageous labour (p. 644).
Incentives to Patience. Story of the Philosopher and Child (p. 644-45). Obedience comes from Patience (p. 645).

iv. Accidie, or Sloth (Discontent, Ennui) (p. 645-49), is an enemy to the 3 states of man,—1. innocence (p. 645). 2. prayer (p. 646), 3. grace;—and to one's livelihood. Its 12 bad consequences (p. 646): 1. Sloth (and its remedy); 2. Dread to begin good works (p. 646); 3. Wanhope, or Despair (and its Remedy) (p. 647); 4. Sommolence (p. 648), and 5. Negligence, or 6. Recklessness, and the Remedy for each; 7. Idleness; 8. *Tarditas*, or tarrying before turning to God (p. 649); 9. Lachesse, or giving up a good work begun; 10. Coldness; 11. Undevotion; 12. Worldly sorrow (p. 649).

The Remedy against Accidie (p. 650-51): Fortitude or Strength, and its 5 kinds. 1. Magnanimity[2] or great Courage; 2. Faith or Hope; 3. Assurance; 4. Magnificence; 5. Constancy (p. 651).

[1] Does Chaucer here refer to his former wife?
[2] Miswritten 'Magnificence' in Ellesmere and Lansdowne MSS.

v. AVARICE (p. 651-57). The difference between Avarice and Covetousness (p. 651); and between an Idolater and an avaricious man (p. 652). Of Covetousness, and lords' extortion from their bondmen: "humble folk been Cristes freendes" (p. 652-53). The Duty of lords to their thralls or churls. Of those that pillage Holy Church (p. 653-54); lords who plunder the poor are like wolves (p. 654). Of Deceit between Merchant and Merchant (p. 654). Of honest bodily Merchandise (the surplus of one country may be sent to help another) (p. 654). Of spiritual Merchandise, or Simony, and its 2 kinds (p. 655),—thieves that steal Christ's souls get livings (p. 655-56);—Hasardry or Games of Chance (p. 656). Other outcomes of Avarice (p. 656): 1. Lying, 2. Theft (bodily and spiritual) (p. 656-57), 3. False Witness, 4. False Oaths (p. 657).

The Remedy against Avarice (p. 657): Mercy and Pity, and reasonable Liberality (p. 658). Of foolish largess (p. 658).

vi. GLUTTONY (p. 658-59), and its 5 kinds (p. 659): 1. Drunkenness, or the burial of man's reason; 2. a troubled spirit; 3. bad way of eating; 4. distemperd bodily humours; 5. forgetfulness. Or, as St Gregory says, 1. eating too soon; 2. eating too delicate food; 3. taking too much; 4. troubling too much about cooking food; 5. eating greedily: these are the 5 fingers of the devil's hand (p. 659).

The Remedy against Gluttony (p. 660): Abstinence, and its fellows. Temperance, Shame, Content with plain food, Moderation, Soberness, Sparing (p. 660).

vii. LECHERY (p. 660). Its punishment in the Old Testament (p. 660). Adultery, and the desire of it (p. 661-62).

The 5 fingers of the Devil's other hand (p. 662); 1. foolish looking; 2. villainous touching; 3. foul words; 4. kissing (old dotards, and dry dogs at a rose-tree (p. 662); and how a man should love his wife); 5. the stinking deed of lechery (p. 663). Its kinds: 1. Fornication. Taking a maid's maidenhead, or 100th fruit (p. 663). 2. Adultery, defined. 3. Harms following from it: *a.* breaking of faith; *b.* theft (of the wife's body from her husband (Joseph and Potiphar's wife), and of her soul from Christ); *c.* breaking God's commandment, and defouling Christ (p. 664). Of Harlots and Bawds (p. 665). Adultery is set between Theft and Manslaughter. More kinds of Adultery: 1. by Men bound by Religious Vows, &c.; 2. those in Holy Orders (p. 665). Lecherous Priests are like a free Bull in a town, and they eat raw flesh of folk's wives and daughters (p. 666); 3. by man and wife copulating for pleasure only (p. 667); 4. copulation with kinsfolk, spiritual (or godchildren) or fleshly (blood relations). 5. the abominable unmentionable sin; 6. Pollution, of 3 kinds: 1. too rank humours; 2. weakness (p. 667); 3. evil thoughts (p. 668).

The Remedy for Lechery (p. 668): I. Chastity and Continence.

1. in Marriage. (The true effect of Marriage. One husband to have one wife (p. 668). How a man should behave to his wife (p. 669). How the wife should be subject to her husband (p. 669), and be moderate in behaviour, discreet in words, &c. (p. 669-70). The 3 causes for which man and wife may copulate (p. 670): *a.* begetting of children; *b.* to pay the mutual debt of their bodies; *c.* to avoid lechery (p. 670). The 4th cause, pleasure, is deadly sin (p. 670-71).)

2. In Widowhood; 3. Virginity (p. 671).

II. Special avoidance of causes of lechery: *a.* eating and drinking; long sleeping; *b.* the person who'd tempt you (p. 671-72). (I wish I could tell you the Ten Commandments; but it's too high doctrine (p. 672).) [End of *Confession*, § 1, *c.*]

Sin is in heart, mouth, deed, by the 5 Wits (p. 672).

§ 1.*b*. (see p. 615-16.) The 7 Circumstances that encrease or aggravate sins (p. 672). 1. the person who sins (male or female, &c.); 2. the kind of sin (fornication or homicide); 3. the place it was committed in (as in a church, by a priest) (p. 673); 4. for what motive; 5. the number of times it was committed; 6. by what temptation; 7. how it was committed; and all other circumstances (p. 674).

CONFESSION, § 2, § 3 (p. 674-79).

Profitable Confession, and its 4 (= 3) *Conditions* (p. 674):

1. sorrowful bitterness of heart (p. 674); its 5 signs: *a*. shamefastness (like the Publican's) (p. 675); *b*. humility; *c*. fulness of tears (p. 675); *d*. no hesitation (like the Magdalen) for shame; *e*. obedience to receive penance laid on you (p. 675).
2. speedy Confession (p. 676); its 4 Conditions: *f*. that it be well thought over; *g*. the greatness and number of sins must be understood; *h*. the sinner must be contrite, and *i*. avoid occasions of sins.
3. Shrift must be made to one man, not more (p. 676).

True Shrift, and its 10 *Conditions* (p. 677): 1. that it be of free will; 2. that it be lawful (both sinner and priest, Popish); 3. that it be not despairing of Christ's mercy; 4. that a man accuse himself only, and not another; 5. that it be not lying (accusing oneself of sins never committed) (p. 678); that it be by one's own mouth, and not by letter; 7. that the sin be not painted with fair words; 8. that the shrift be to a discreet priest; 9. that the shrift be not made for vain-glory, but for fear of Christ; 10. that the shrift be not made suddenly, for a joke (p. 678). You may be shriven more than once for the same sin; and should be houseld once a year (p. 679).

PART III (*no.* v. *continued, and no.* vi.).

SATISFACTION (THE 3RD REQUISITE FOR PENITENCE) (p. 679—684).

In *α*. Alms. *β*. bodily punishment.

α. *Alms and its three kinds* (p. 679): 1. Contrition of heart. 2. Pity for one's neighbour's faults. 3. Giving good counsel to other's souls and bodies (food, visits in prison, burial). These Alms should be done privily, if possible (p. 680).

β. *Bodily Punishment* (*Penance*), *of* 4 *kinds:* 1. Prayers (chiefly of the Paternoster, whose expounding I leave to Masters of Theology) (p. 680). 2. Watching, and its 3 kinds: forbearing, *a*. meat and drink, *b*. worldly jollity, and *c*. deadly sin (p. 681). 3. Fasting, and its 4 kinds: Liberality to poor folk; spiritual gladness of heart; not grudging at fasting; reasonable eating. 4. Virtuous teachings, or Discipline: *a*. by word, writing, or example; *b*. by wearing hairshirts., &c., next your skin, scourging yourself, taking evils and injuries patiently (p. 682). [End of no. v. in Part i; p. 593.]

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vi. The 4 Things that disturb Penance [no. vi, or last §, of p. 593 at foot] (p. 682). 1. Dread, and its remedy. 2. Shame, and its remedy. 3. Hope: *a*. of long life, and *b*. consequent over-confidence in Christ's mercy (p. 683). 4. Wanhope, or Despair of Mercy; its 3 kinds: *x*. from great and long continued sin; *y*. from falls-back into sin; *z*. from not being able to persevere in goodness (p. 683).

The fruit of Penance (p. 683-4).

EPILOGUE.

The Author's Leave-taking, and Lament over, and Withdrawal of, his Sinful Books, &c. (p. 684-85).

[*There are no breaks in the MS. Tyrwhitt's are kept here to prevent slight differences in the texts throwing the Six-Text out of gear.*]

[*Arch. Seld. B.* 14, *leaf* 268, *Bodleian Library.*]

[And next folowyng bigynneth his tale.

[75] Oure swete lord god of heuen / that no man wol perisshe / but wol that we come alle to the knewleche of him / *and* to the blisful liff that is perdurable / [76] amonestetħ vs bi the prophete Ierome that seith in this wise / [77] stondiħ vppon the weyes *and* seeħ *and* axeħ of olde pathes / that is to seie [1] of olde sentences / whiche is the good weye / [78] *and* walketħ in that weye / *and* ye shulle fynde refresshynge / for youre soules // [79] Many ben the weyes spirituel that leden folke to oure lord ihesu criste *and* to the regne of glorie // [80] Of whiche weyes ther is a ful noble weye / *and* a ful couenable weye / whiche may not fayle to man ne to woman / that thorugħ synne hatħ mysgoon / fro the rigħt weye of Ierusalem celestial / [81] *and* this weie is cleped penaunce / of whiche men shulde gladly herken *and* enqueren / with al here herte / [82] to wete what is penaunce / *and* wherfore it is cleped penaunce / *and* in how many manere ben the accions of worchinge of penaunce / [83] *and* how many spicis ther ben of penaunce / *and* whiche thinges apperteyne *and* bihoven to penaunce / *and* whiche thinges distorben penance /

¶ Jerome. state super vias. &c.

¶ Ambrosius. [84] Seint Ambrose seith that penaunce is the pleynynge of man for the gilt that he hath don and no more to do any thing / for whiche him aught to pleyne / [85] And som Doctor seith / penaunce is the weymentynge of man that sorowith for his synne / *and* peyneth him-selff for he hath mys-dou*n* / [86] penaunce with ce*r*teyne circumstaunce / is verry repentaunce of man that halt him-selff in sorow *and* other peyne for his giltes / [87] And for he shal be verry penitent / he shal first biwailen the synne that he hath dou*n* / *and* stedfastly purposen in his herte to haue shrifft of mouthe / *and* to don satisfaccion / [88] *and* neue*r*e to do thing for whiche him ought more to waile / or to compleyne / *and* to contenue in goode werkes / or ellis his repentaunce may nat
¶ Isodorus. availe / [89] For as seint Isidor seith / he is a Iaper *and* a gabber *and* no verry repentaunte / that efft-sone doth thing / for whiche him ought to repent [90] weping / and nought for to stinte to do synne / may not availe [91] but natheles men shulde hope / that at eue*r*y tyme that a man falleth be it neue*r*e so offt / that he may arise thorugh penaunce if he haue grace / but ce*r*teynely [1]it is grete doute /
¶ Gregorie [92] ffor as seith seint Gregory / vnnethes ariseth he oute of his synne / that is charged with the charge of euel vsage / [93] And ther-fore repentyng folke that stinte for to synne / *and* forlete synne / or synne for-lete hem / Holy chirche holt hem seker of here saluaciou*n* [94] And he that stinteth *and* verrily repenteth him in his last ende / Holy chirch*e* yit hopeth his saluacion bi the grete me*r*cy of oure lord ih*es*u for his repentaunce / but taketh the seker weye that is certeyne //

[95] And now sithen I haue declared yow whath thinge is penaunce / Now shulne ye vnderstonde that ther ben thre accions of penaunce / [96] The first is if a man be baptized aft*er* that he hath don
¶ Austyne synne / [97] seint Austyn seith / but he be penitent for his olde synful liff / he may nat bigynne / the newe

clene liff / [98] for certes if he be baptised withoute penaunce of his olde gilte he resceivith the marke of baptime / but not the grace ne the remission of his synnes / til he haue verry repentaunce // [99] Another defaute is this / that men don dedely synne / after that thei haue received baptime / [100] The thrid defaute is / that men fallen in venial synnes / affter here baptime / fro day to day / [101] therof seith Seynt Austyne / that the penaunce of goode *and* humble folke is the penaunce of euery daie //

Austyne

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[102] The spices of penaunce ben thre / that oon of hem is solempne / Another comune / And the thride prive / [103] Thilke penaunce that is solempne is in two maners / as is to be put out of holy chirche in lente for slaughter of children / *and* suche manere thinge / [104] Another is whan a man hath synned openly[1]] [2]of which synne þe fame is openly spoken in þe contre ¶ And þenne holy chirche by Iuggement destreigneþ him for to do peñance open. [105] Som penañce is þat prestes enioygnen me communly in certein caas as for to gon perauenture naked in pylgrimage or bare foot [106] ¶ Pruie penaunce is þilke þat men don alday for priue synnes of whiche we schryuen vs pryuyly and resceyuen priue penañce

[1] Selden *extract ends*]
[2] Corpus *begins*]

[107] ¶ Now schalt þou vnderstande what byhoueþ and is necessarie to verray perfyte penaunce ¶ and þese standen on þre þinges [108] ¶ Contricioñ of herte ¶ Confessioñ of mouþ // and Satisfaccioñ [109] ¶ ffor which saiþ Iohñ Gresostomus ¶ Penitence destreigneþ man to accepte benignely euery peyne þat is him enioyned wiþ contricion of herte and schrift of mowþ wiþ satisfaccioñ and in werching of alle maner humilite [110] ¶ And þis is fruytful penytence azein þre þinges in whiche we wraþþen oure lord ihesu crist [111] þis is to sayn by delyt/ in þenking By rechelesnesse in speking ¶ By wicked synful worching [112] ¶ And azeins þise

¶ Gresostomus

wikkede gultes is penitence þat may be likened vnto a tre

[113] ¶ The rote of þis tre is contricioñ þat huydeþ him in þe herte of him þat is verray repentañt Right as þe roote of a tree huydeþ him in þe erþe [114] ¶ Of þe roote of contricioñ springeþ a stalke þat bereþ braunches and leues of confessioñ and fruyt of satisfaccioñ [115] ¶ ffor whiche crist saiþ in þe gospelle Doþ digne fruyt of penitence ¶ ffor by þis fruyte may men knowe þis tree and nouȝt by þe roote þat is hidde in þe herte of a man ne by þe braunches ne by þe leeues of confessioñ

¶ Textus [116] ¶ And þerfore oure lord ihesu crist saiþ þus ¶ By þe fruyt of hem schuln ȝe knowe hem. [117] of þis roote springeþ a seed of grace þe which seed is mooder of sikernesse and þis seed is egre and hoot [118] ¶ þe grace of þis seed springeþ of god þorough þe remembrañce of þe day of doome and on þe peynes of helle [119] ¶ Of þis matiere saiþ Salamon ¶ þat in þe drede of god man forleteþ his synne [120] ¶ The hete

¶ Salomon of þis seed is þe loue of god and þe desirynge of þe ioye perdurable [121] þis hete draweþ þe herte of man to god and doþ him hate his synne [122] ¶ ffor soþly þer is no þing þat sauoureþ so wel a childe as þe mylk of his norice ¶ ne no þing is to him more abhominable þen þilke mylk whan it is medled wiþ oþer mete [123] ¶ Right so synful man þat loueþ his synne him semeþ þat it is to him most sweete / of any þing [124] ¶ but fro þat tyme þat he loueþ sadly oure lord ihesu crist and desireþ þe lyff perdurable þer nys to him more abhominable [125] ¶ ffor soþe þe lawe of god is þe loue of god ¶ ffor which

dauid .dauid. þe prophete saiþ ¶ I haue loued þy lawe [1]and hated wikkednesse & haten. he þat loueþ god kepeþ his lawe and his word [126] ¶ This tree saugh þe prophete Danyel in spirit vpon þe auysioñ of Nabugodonosor when he counseiled him to do penitence [127] ¶ Penaunce is þe tre of lyf to hem þat it resceyuen And he þat haldeþ him

verray penitent is blessed after þe sentence of Salomon. Salo*mon*

[128] ¶ In þis penitence or contricioñ man schal vnderstonde .iiij. þinges: þat is to say what is co*n*tricioñ And whiche ben þe causes þat meuen a man to contricioñ and how he schulde be contrite and what contricioñ avayled to þe soule [129] þanne it is þus þat contricioñ is þe verray sorwe þat a man resceyueþ in his herte for his synnes wiþ sadde purpos to schryuen him and to do penaunce / and neuer more to don synne [130] and þis sorwe schal ben in þis maneres as saiþ Seint Bernard ¶ hit schal be greuous and heuy and ful Bernardus scharp and poynañt in herte [131] ¶ ffirst for a man haþ agilt his lord and his creatour ¶ And more scharp and poynañt for he haþ agult his fader celestial [132] ¶ And ȝet more scharp and poynañt ¶ ffor he haþ wraþþed and agilt him þat bought him þat with his p*re*cious blood haþ deliuered vs fro þe bandes of synne and fro þe cruelte of þe deuel and fro þe peynes of helle

[133] ¶ These causes þat oughten to meuen a man to contricioñ ben vj ¶ ffirst a man schal remembre him of .vj. causes his synnes [134] but loke þat þilke remembr*an*ce be to him no delyte by no wey: but gret schame & sorwe for his gulte ¶ ffor Iob saiþ ¶ Synful men don Iob werkes worþy of co*n*fessioun. [135] ¶ And þ*er*fore saiþ Ezechie ¶ I wol remembre me all*e* þe ȝeres of my lyff Ezechiele in bitternesse of my*n* herte ¶ [136] And god saiþ in þapocalips ¶ Remembreþ ȝow fro whennes þat ȝe ben Apocal*ips* falle ¶ ffor biforn þat tyme þat ȝe synned ȝe were þe children of god and lymes of þe regne of god [137] ¶ But for ȝoure synne ȝe ben waxe þralles and foule and membres of þe feende / hate of aungeles sclaundre of holy chirche and foode of þe false s*er*pent p*er*petuel mateere of þe furye of helle [138] ¶ and þat more foul and abhominable ffor ȝe trespassen so often tyme as doþ þe hound þat torneþ to eten his spuyng [139] and ȝet

ben ȝe foulere for ȝoure longe continaunce in synne and ȝoure synful vsage for whiche ȝe ben roten in ȝoure synne as a beeste in his dunge [140] Suche maner of þouȝtes maken a man haue schame for his synne
Ezechiel and no delite as god saiþ by þe prophete Ezechiel [141] ¶ ȝe schuln remembre ȝow of ȝoure weyes and þey schuln displese ȝow soþely ¶ Synnes ben þe weyes þat leden folk to helle

[142] ¶ The secounde cause that oughte to make a man to haue disdeyne of synne is þis þat as saiþ seint
Petrus petre who so [1]doþ synne is þralle of synne and synne putteþ a man in gret þraldom [143] and þerfore saiþ þe prophete Ezechiele I wente sorwful in desdeyn of myself Certes wel aughte a man haue disdeyne of synne and wiþdrawe him fro þat
Seneka þraldom and vilenye [144] ¶ And lo what saiþ Seneca in þis matiere he saiþ þus Though I wiste þat neyþer god ne man ne schulde neuere knowen it/ ȝet wolde I haue disdeyne for to do synne. [145] And þe same Seneka seiþ ¶ I am born to grettere þinges þan to be þralle to my body. [146] More þralle may no man ne no womman make of his body? þan ȝeue his body to synne [147] ¶ And were it þe foulest cheerl or þe foulest womman þat lyueþ and lest of value ȝet is he chañged and most foule and more in seruitute [148] euer fro þe heiher degre þat man falleþ þe more is he þralle and more vnto god and to þe worlde vile and abhominable [149] ¶ O goode god wel aughte men haue disdeyne of synne. seþþen þat þurgh̄ synne þer he was free now is he maked bonde / [150] and þerfore seiþ seint austyn ¶ If þou haue desdeigne of þy seruañt/ if he agilt or synned. haue þou þanne disdeyne þat þou þi self schuldest do synne [151] Take reward of þy value þat þou ne be to foul to þin value ne self [152] ¶ Allas wel oughten þey þanne haue disdeyn to be

*ser*uantȝ and þralle to synne and sore ben aschamed
of hemself [153] ¶ þat god of his endeles goodnesse
haþ set hem in heih astate or ȝeuen hem wiþ strengþe
of body hele. beaute. p*ro*sperite / [154] and
bought hem fro þe deth wiþ his herte blood þat
þay so vnkyndely aȝeiins his gentilnesse quyten him so
vileynesly to slaught*er* of here owne soules [155] ¶ O
goode god ȝe wo*m*men þat ben of so gret beaute
Remembreth ȝou of þe p*ro*uerbe of Salamon ¶ he seiþ ¶ Sala*m*on
[156] he likeneþ a fair wo*m*man þat is a fool of hire body
y-like to a rynge of golde þat werith in þe groyne of a sowe
[157] ¶ ffor right as a sowe wroteþ in eu*er*y ordure so
wroteþ sche hire beaute in stynkynge ordure of synne

[158] ¶ The þridde cause þat oughte to meuen a man ¶ iij^a *causa*
to contricioñ is drede of þe day of doome and of þe
horrible peynes of helle [159] ¶ ffor as seint Ierom saiþ ¶ *Ieronimus*
¶ At eu*er*y tyme þat me remembreþ of þe day of doome I
quake. [160] ffor whan I ete or drinke or do what so I
do: euere semeþ me þat þe trompe sowneþ in my*n* eere.
[161] Riseþ vp þat ben deede and comeþ to þe
Iuggeme*n*t [162] of goode god mechel aughte a man to
drede such a Iuggeme*n*t þere as we schuln ben alle
as seiþ seint Poule byfore þe strete of oure lord ih*es*u
crist [163] wher as he schal maken a gene*r*al con-
gregacioñ wher as no man may ben absent [164] ffor
certes þere ne auayleþ non essoyne ne excusacion
[165] [1]And nouȝt only þat oure defautes schullen ben
y-Iuged ¶ but eek þat alle oure werkes schuln openly
ben knowen [166] and as þat saiþ Seint bernard. þer ne *Bernardus*
schal no pledynge auayle ne no sleighte we schullen ȝeuen
rekenyng of eu*er*y ydel word [167] ¶ Ther schuln we haue
a Iugge þat may nought / be deceyued ne corupt. And why:
ffor certes alle oure þoughtes ben discouered as to him
ne for prayere. ne for meede he wil not ben corrupte
[168] ¶ And þ*er*fore saith Salamo*n* ¶ The wraþþe of god Sala*m*on
wol nought ben corrupte And þ*er*fore saith Salamo*n* þe wreche

of' god ne wol nought' spare no wight' for praier ne for ȝifte
¶ And þ*er*fore at' þe day of' doom þer nys non hope to eskape
Anselmus [169] Wherfore as seiþ Anselme ¶ fful gret'
anguyssche schuln þe synful folk' haue at' þat' tyme
[170] ¶ Ther schal be þe sterne and þe wroth Iuge sitte aboue
And vnder him þe orrible putte of' helle to de-
struye him þat' mot' byknowe his synnes whiche
synnes openly ben schewed byforn god and biforn
eu*er*y creature [171] and on þe lift' syde moo deeueles
þan þe herte may þinke for to harye and to drawe
þe sinful soules to þe pyne of' helle [172] and w*ith*
Inne þe hertes of' folk' schal be þe bytyng' Conscience
¶ And wiþoute forþ schal be þe world al brennyng'
[173] ¶ Whider schal þenne þe wrecched synful soule fflee
to huyde him? Certes he may nouȝt' huyde him. he moste
come forþ and schewe him [174] ¶ ffor certes as saiþ
seint' Ier*om* // The erþe schal caste him out' of' him
and þe see also and þe aier also þat' schal ben ful of'
þondir clappes and lightenynges [175] ¶ Now soþly
who so wol remembre him of' þese þinges? I gesse
þat' his synnes schal nought' turne him in to delyte but' to gret'
sorwe for drede of' þe peyne of' helle [176] and þ*er*-
Iob. fore saiþ Iob to god ¶ Suffre lord þat' I may a while
bywayle and wepe er I go and weepe wiþouten retournyng' to
þe derke lande couered wiþ þe derknesse of' deþ [177]
to þe land of' mysese and of' derkenesse where as is
schadewe of' deth wher as þer nys non oþ*er* or-
dinañce but' grisly drede þat' euer schal laste [178]
¶ Lo heere may ȝe seen þat' Iob p*re*yede respite a while
exemplum to bywepe and wayle his trespas ¶ ffor sooþly oo day of'
respite is bettre þan alle þe tresour of þis world [179] ¶ And
for as moche as man may quyte himself' biforn god
by penitence in þis world and nought' by tresour ¶ þ*er*fore
schulde he preye to god to ȝiue him respyt' a while to
byweepen and byweylen his trespas // [180] ¶ ffor certes al
þe sorwe þat' a man mighte make fro þe Begynnyng'

of þe world nys but alytel þing at þe regarde of þe sorwe of helle [181] ¶ The cause why þat Iob clepeþ helle þe lond of derknesses: [182] vnd*er*stond*eth* þat he clepeþ it lande of erþe ¶ ffor it is stable and neu*er* schal faile [1]derknes ¶ ffor he þat is in helle haþ defaute of light material [183] ¶ ffor certes þe derke light þat schal come out of þe fuyre þat euer schal brenne schal turne / him al to peyne ¶ þat is in helle ffor it scheweþ him to þe Orible deueles þat him tormenten [184] couered wiþ þe derknesse of deþ [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . [185] . . .
no gap in the MS.] ben þe synnes þat þe wrecchede man haþ don whiche þat distourben him to se þe face of god Right as a derk clowde bitwixen hous and þe sonne- [186] lond of myssese by cause þat þ*er* ben þre maneres of defautes aȝeins þre þinges þat folk of þis world han in þis p*re*sent lyf þat is to say honoures delices and richesse [187] aȝeins honour han þey in helle / schame and confusiõ [188] ¶ ffor wel ȝe wite þat men clepen honour þe reuerence þat men don to man ¶ But in helle is non honour ne reu*er*ence ¶ ffor certes nomore reuerence schal be do to a king þan to a knaue [189] ¶ ffor which god saiþ by þe p*rophete* I*er*em*ie* ¶ Thilke folk þat me despysen schuln ben in despite [190] ¶ Honour is eek cleped gret worschipe þer schal no wight seruen oþer ¶ But of harme and torment. hono*ur* is eek cleped gret dignite and heighnesse ¶ But in helle schullen þey ben alle fortroden of deueles [191] as god saiþ ¶ þe Orrible deueles schuln gon & comen vpon þe heedes of dampned folk ¶ And þis is for as meche as þe heyer þat þey weren in þis p*re*sent lyff/: þe more schuln þey ben abated and defouled in helle [192] ¶ aȝeins þe riche of þis world schullen þey haue mysese of pouerte and þis pouert schal be .iiij. þinges [193] ¶ In defaute of tresour of which

exemplum

textus Ieremie /

.dauid. Dauid saiþ ¶ The riche folk þat enbraceden and Oneden in al here herte to tresour of þis world schullen slepe / in þe slepyng of deþ as no þing schuln þey fynden in here handes of alle here tresour [194] ¶ And more ouer þe myseyse of helle schal ben in defaute of mete & drinke [195] ffor god saiþ þus by moyses ¶ þey schuln be wasted wiþ hunger and þe briddes of helle schuln deuoure him wiþ bitter deþ and þe galle of þe dragoñ [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] here morselle [196] and forþer ouer here mysayse schal ben in defaute of cloþing ¶ ffor þey schuln be naked in body as of cloþing saue þe fuyre in whiche þey brenne and oþer filþes [197] and naked schuln þey ben of soule of alle maner vertues which þat is þe cloþing of soule ¶ Where be þenne þe gay robes and þe softe schetes and þe smale schertes. [198] lo what saiþ god of hem by þe prophete. Isaye ¶ That vnder hem schuln be strawed mouthes ¶ and here couertours schuln ben of wormes of helle [199] ¶ and furþer ouer here mysayse schal ben in defaute of freendes ¶ ffor he is nought pouere þat haþ goode freendes ¶ But þer is no freend [200] ¶ ffor neiþer god ne creature schal be frend to hem and euerych of hem schal haten oþer [1]wiþ dedly hate [201] ¶ þe sones of þe doughtren schullen rebellen aȝeins fader and mooder and kynredes aȝein kynrede and chyden and despisen euerich of hem oþer boþe day and nigħt as god saiþ by þe prophete. Michias. [202] and þe louynge children þat whilom loueden so fleissly euerich oþer ¶ Wolden euerich of hem eten oþer if þay mighte [203] ¶ ffor how scholde þey louen hem to gydere in þe peynes of helle ¶ Whan þey hateden euerich of hem oþer in þe prosperite of þis lyf [204] ¶ ffor truste wel here fleisschly loue was deedly hate as saiþ þe prophete .dauid. ¶ Who so þat loueþ wikkednesse he hateþ his soule [205] ¶ And who so hateþ his owen soule ¶ certes he may loue non oþer wigħt

Isaye

dominus per moysen

dauid

in no manere [206] ¶ And *per*fore in helle is no frendschipe ¶ but euer þe more fleisshly kynredes þat ben in helle: þe more cursyng. þe more chydyng and þe more dedly hate þer is among hem [207] ¶ and furþer ouer þey schullen haue defaute of alle maner delites ¶ ffor why delices ben þe appetites of þe .v. wittes ¶ as sight. heeryng. smellyng. Sauoryng. and touching. [208] but in helle here sighte schal be ful of derknesse and of smoke and ful of teeres and here heerynge ful of waymentynge and of gruntynge of teeþ as saiþ ihesu *cri*st [209] here nose þrulles schuln ben ful of stynke ¶ And as saiþ Isaye þe p*ro*phe*te* ¶ here sauorynge schal be ful of bitter galle [210] and touching of here body ycouered wiþ fuyre þat neuer schal be quenched And wiþ wormes þat neuere / schullen deyen as god saiþ by þe mouþ of Isaye [211] ¶ And for as moche as þey schuln nouȝt wene þat þey may deyen for peyne and by here deþ flee fro peyne þat may þey vnderstonde in þe word of Iob þat saiþ. þer as is þe schadewe of deþ [212] ¶ Certes a schadewe haþ þe liknes of þe þing of which it / is schadewe ¶ but schadewe nys nought þe same þing of which it is schadewe [213] ¶ right so fareþ þe peyne of helle hit is y-like deþ for þe anguyssche orrible And why ¶ ffor it peyneþ hem euere as þough men schullen deyen anon But certes þey schuln nought deyen [214] ¶ ffor as saiþ seint Gregory to wrecchede Caytyfs synful schal ben deþ wiþouten deþ and ende wiþouten ende ¶ And defaute wiþouten faylinge [215] ¶ ffor here deþ schal alway lyue ¶ And here ende schal euere more begynne. and here defaute schal nought faile [216] ¶ And *per*fore saiþ S*eint* Iohn euaungelist ¶ They schullen folwe deþ and þey schuln nought fynden him ¶ and þey desiren to deye and deþ schal flee fro hem [217] ¶ And eek Iob saiþ þat in helle is non ordre of reule. [218] and al be it so þat god haþ created alle þing in right ordre and no þing wiþ-

Ihesus textus

Isaye

Iohannes euaungelista

Iob

outen ordre ¶ But alle þinges ben ordeigned [1]and nombred ¶ ȝet naþeles þey þat ben dampned ben no þing in ordre ne holden non ordre [219] ¶ ffor þe erþe schal bere hem no fruyt [220] ffor as þe prophete saiþ Dauid. god schal destruye þe fruyt of þe erthe as fro hem Ne water schal ȝeue hem no moysture ne þe aier no refreissching. ne fuyr no light [221] ¶ ffor as saiþ seint Basile ¶ The brennyng of þe fuyr of þis world schal god ȝeuen in helle to hem þat ben dampned [222] ¶ But þe light and þe clernesse schal be ȝouen in to heuene to his children ¶ Right as þe goode man ȝeueþ fleissh to his children and bones to his houndes [223] ¶ And for þey schullen haue non hope to eschape saiþ
Iob Iob. at þe laste þat þer schal horrour and grisly drede dwelle wiþouten ende [224] ¶ horrour is alway drede of harme þat is to come. and þis drede schal euere dwelle in þe hertes of hem þat ben dampned ¶ And þerfore han þay lorne alle here hope for .vij. causes [225] ¶ ffirst for god þat is here Iuge schal be wiþouten mercy to hem. ne þey may nought please him ne non of his halwes ne þey may ȝyue no þing for here raunsoñ [226] ne þay haue no voys / to speke to him. Ne þey may nouȝt flee fro peyne. ne þay haue no goodnesse in hem þat þay may schewe to delyuere hem fro peyne
Salomon [227] And þerfore saiþ Salomon ¶ The wikkede man deyeþ. and whan he is deed: he schal haue non hope to eskape fro peyne [228] ¶ Who so schame wel wolde vnderstande þese peynes and beþinke him wel þat he haþ disserued þilke peynes for his synnes Certes he schulde haue more talent to syke and to wepe. þen for to syngen and to pleye [229] ¶ ffor as seiþ Salomon ¶ Who so þat hadde þe science for to knowe þo peynes þat ben establissched and ordeyned for synne: he wolde make sorwe. [230] þilke science as seiþ seint austyn makeþ a man to weymenten in his herte
iiij^um capitulum [231] ¶ The .iiij^e. poynt þat oughte make a man

haue contricioñ is þe sorweful remembraunce of þe good þat/ he haþ lost/ to doon heere in erþe and eek þe good þat he haþ lorn [232] ¶ Soþly þe goode werkes þat he haþ lost: eyþer þey ben þe goode werkes þat he wrought er he felle in to dedly synne ¶ Or elles þe goode werkes þat he wrought whil he lay in synne [233] ¶ Soþly þe goode werkes þat he dide biforn þat he fylle in synne ben alle mortefied and astonyed and dulled by þe ofte synnynge // [234] þat oþer goode werkes þat he wroughte whiles he lay in synne þey ben outerly deede as to þe lyff /perdurable in heuene [235] ¶ þenne þilke goode werkes þat ben mortefyed by often synnyng whiche goode werkes he dide whiles he was in charite ne mowen neuere quyken aȝein wiþouten verray penytence [236] ¶ And þerof saith god by þe mouþ of Ezechielle þat is [1]þe rightful man retourne aȝein from his rightwisnesse and to wirche wikkednesse schal he lyue [237] nay. ffor alle þe goode werkes þat he haþ wrouȝt / ne schuln neuer ben in remembrance ffor he schal deye in his synne [238] ¶ And vpon þilke chapitre seiþ Seint Gregori þus þat we schulde vnderstande þis principally [239] þat whenne we doon deedly synne it is for nought þanne to reherse or drawe in to memorie þe goode werkes þat we han wrought byforne [240] ¶ ffor certes in þe werkinge of dedly synne / þer is no triste / to no good werk þat we han don toforne þat is to sayn as for to haue þerby þe lyff perdurable in heuene [241] [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] whan we han contricioñ [242] ¶ But soþely þe goode werkes þat men don whiles þat þey ben in dedly synne for as moche as þey weren don in dedly synne þey may neuer quiken aȝein [243] ¶ ffor certes þing þat neuer haþ lyff may neuere quyke ¶ And naþeles al be it þat þey ne auailen nought to han þe lyff perdurable: ȝet auailen

þey to abreggen of þe peyne of helle or elles to geten temp*er*al richesse [244] ¶ Or elles þat god wol þe raþere enlumyne and lightne þe herte of þe synful ma*n* to han repentañce. [245] and eek þey auaylen for to vsen a man to doon good werke þat þe feende haue þe lesse power of his soule [246] ¶ and þus þe curteyse lord ih*es*u c*ris*t ne wol þat no good werk be loste ¶ ffor in somwhat it schal auayle [247] ¶ But for as moche þe goode werkes þat men don whiles þey ben in good lijf ben al mortefyed by synne folwynge ¶ And eek seþenes all*e* þe goode werkes þat men doon whiles þey ben in dedly synne ben outrely deede as for to haue þe lyff p*er*durable: [248] wel may þat man þat no good werk ne doþ Synge þilke newe freissche song. Iay tout p*er*du moñ temps & moñ labour [249] ¶ ffor certes synne byreueþ a man goodnesse and nature and eek þe goodnesse of g*ra*ce [250] ¶ ffor soþe þe g*ra*ce of þe holy gost fareþ as fuyr þat may nouȝt ben ydel ffor fuyr fayleþ anon as it forleseþ his wirchinge [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [251] þenne leseþ þe synful man þe goodnesse of glory þat oonly is behight to goode men þat labouren and werken [252] ¶ Wel may he be sory þenne þat oweth all*e* his lyff to god as lange as he lyueth haþ lyued and eek als longe as he schal lyue þat no goodnesse ne haþ to paye wiþ his dette to god to whom he oweþ all*e* his lyff [253] ¶ ffor truste wel he schal ȝiue acountes as saiþ seint Bernard of all*e* þe goodes þat han ben ȝouen him in þis p*re*sent lyff / and how he haþ hem dispended [254] nought so moche þat / þer schal nought perissche an heer of his heede ne a moment of an houre ne schal not p*er*issche of his tyme þat he ne schal ȝiue of hit a rekenyng

v^a causa [255] ¶ The v^te. þing þat oughte meue a man [1]to contricioñ is rememb*ra*nce of þe passioñ þat oure lord ih*es*u crist suffred for oure synnes [256] ¶ ffor as saiþ seint Bernard ¶ Whil þat I lyue I schal haue remem-

brance of þe trauailes þat oure lord ihesu crist suffred in prechinge [257] his werynesse in trauaillynge. his temptacioñs whan he fasted his longe wakinges when he prayed his teeres when þat he wepte for pite of good peple [258] ¶ þe woo and þe schame and þe filthe þat men seyden to him ofte foule spittyng þat men spitten on his face ¶ of þe buffettes þat men ȝeuen him ¶ of þe foule mouthes and of þe repreues þat men to him sayden [259] ¶ Of þe nayles wiþ þe whiche he was nayled to þe cros and of alle þe remenañt of his passioñ þat he suffrede for my synnes and no þing for his gilte [260] ¶ And ȝe schuln vnderstonde þat in mannes synne is euery maner ordre of ordinance turned vp so doun [261] ffor it is soþ þat god and resoñ and sensualite and þe body of man ben so ordeyned þat euerich of þise. .iiij. þinges/ schulde haue lordschipe ouer þat oþer [262] and þus god schulde haue lordschipe ouer resoñ and resoñ ouer sensualite and sensualite ouer þe body of man [263] ¶ And soþly whan man synneþ: al þis ordre of ordinañce is turned vp so doñ [264] ¶ And þerfore þanne for as moche as þe resoñ of man wol noughť be subget ne obeissant to god þat is his lord by righť: þerfore leeseþ it þe lordschipe þat it schulde haue in sensualite and eeke ouer þe body of man [265] ¶ And whi ¶ ffor sensualite rebelleþ þanne aȝein resoñ And by þat wey leseþ resoñ his lordschipe ouer sensualite and ouer þe body [266] ¶ ffor right as resoñ is rebelle to god Righť so is boþe sensualite rebel to resoñ and þe body also [267] ¶ And certes þis ordiñance and þis rebellioñ oure lord ihesu crist aboughte vpon his precious body ful dere herkeneþ in which wise [268] ¶ ffor as meche þanne is resoun rebelle to god: þerfore is man worþi to haue sorwe and to be deed [269] ¶ This suffred oure lord ihesu for man after þat he hadde be betrayed of his disciple and destreyned &

bounde so þat þe blood brast out at euery nayl of his handes as seiþ seint Austyn [270] ¶ And forþermore for as moche as resoñ of man wol nought daunte sensualite whenne it may ¶ Therfore is man worþy to haue schame and þis suffrede oure lord ihesu crist for man when þey spetten in his visage / [271] ¶ And furþer more for as moche þanne as þe caytiff body of man is rebelle boþe to resoñ and to sensualite ¶ þerfore it is worþy þe deþ [272] ¶ And þis suffred oure lord ihesu crist for man vppon þe crosse where as þer was no part of his body fre wiþouten gret peyne and bitter passioñ / [273] and al þis suffrede ihesu crist þat neuer forfeted [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] ¶ To mechil am I peyned for þe same þinges [1]þat I neuer deserued and to mochil defouled for frendschipe þat man is worþy to haue. [274] And þerfore may þe synful man wel say as saiþ seint Bernard. Acursed be þe bitternes [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [275] ¶ ffor certes after þe diuers discordaunces of oure wikkednesse was þe passioñ of Ihesu crist y-ordeyned in diuerse þinges [276] as þus Certeȝ synful mannes soule bytraysed of þe deuel by coueytise of temperel prosperite / and scorned by disceyte when he cheseþ flesschly delites / and ȝet is he tormented by inpacience of aduersite ¶ And bispette ¶ By seruage in subiectioun of synne ¶ And atte laste it is slayn fynally [277] for this disordynañce of synful man was ihesu crist first bytrayed ¶ And after þat was he bounde þat came for to vnbynde vs of synne and of peyne [278] ¶ Thanne was he by-scorned þat only schulde be honoured in alle þinges of alle þinges [279] þenne was his visage þat oughte be desired to be seyn of alle mankynde in which visage aungeles desiren to loken. vileynesly byspette [280] ¶ Thenne was he scourged þat noþing hadde gilt ¶ and fynally þenne was he crucified & slayn [281] ¶ Thenne was he acompliced þe

wordes of Isaye ¶ he was wounded for oure mysdedes and defouled by oure vileynies [282] ¶ Now seþenes þat ihesu crist took vpon himself þe peyne of alle oure wickednesses? Mochil oughte synful man bywepe and bywayle þat for his synnes goddes sone of heuene schulde alle þis peyne endure [283] ¶ The sixte þing þat oughte meue a man to contricioñ is þe hope of .iij. þinges. þat is to sayn. forȝeuenes of synne [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] and þe glorie of heuene wiþ þe which god schal guerdoñ man for his goode deedes· [284] ¶ and for as moche as ihesu crist ȝeueþ vs þese ȝiftes of his largesse and of his souereyn bounte? þerfore is he cleped Ihesus nazarenus rex iudeorum [285] Ihesus is for to sayn sauyour of sauacioñ on whom men schuln hope to haue forȝeuenesse of synnes which þat is proprely sauacioun of synnes [286] ¶ And þerfore sayde þe aungel to Ioseph ¶ þou clepest his name ihesus þat schal saue his poeple of here synnes [287] ¶ And her of seiþ seint Petre ¶ Ther nys non oþer name vnder heuene þat is ȝoue to any man by which a man may be saued but only by ihesus [288] nazerenus is as moche to seyn as florissching in which a man schal hope þat he þat ȝeueþ him remissioñ of synnes schal ȝiue also him grace wel to do ¶ ffor in þe flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comynge. and in forȝiuenesse of synnes is hope of grace wel to do [289] ¶ I was at þe dore of þin herte / saiþ iħc and cleped for to entre ¶ he þat openeþ to me schal haue forȝiuenesse of synne / [290] I wol entre to him by my grace and soupe wiþ him by þe goode werkes þat he schal doon whiche werkes ben þe foode of god and he schal soupe with[1] [[2]me bi the grete ioye / that shal be yove to him || [291] Thus shal man hope for his werkes of penaunce / god sholde yeve him his regne as he bihoteth him / in the gospel /

vj[a] causa de contricione /

[[1] Corpus MS. *ends*]
[[2] Arch. Seld. B. 14, leaf 275, back, for Corpus MS.]

[292] Now shal man vnderstonde / in which

man*er*e shal be his contricion || I seie that hit shal be vniu*er*sale & totale / this is to seine a man shal be verry repentaunt / [1]for alle his synnes that he hath̄ done / in delite of his thought for delite is ful p*er*ilous / [293] ffor ther ben two man*er*e of consentynges / that oon of hem is cleped consenting of affeccioun / whan a man is meved to do synne / & delitetḥ him longe for to thenke on that synne / [294] he hath reson that p*er*ceivetḥ wel that hit is synne ageynste the lawe of god / [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] al though̄ his reson ne consente nat to do the synne in dede / [295] yit seine so*m*me doctours / that suche delite that duellitḥ longe is ful p*er*ilous / al be it neu*er* so lite / [296] And also a man sholde sorowe for al that eu*er* he hath̄ desired ayeines the lawe of god with p*er*fite consentynge of resou*n* / ffor ther-of is no doute / that hit is dedly synne / in consentynge / [297] ffor c*er*tes ther is no dedly synne / but hit is first in man-is thoughte / & aft*er* that in his delite / and so forthe in-to consentynge / & in-to dede / [298] wherfore I seie that many men repente hem neu*er*e of suche thoughtes / & delites / ne neu*er*e shriven hem of hit / but only of the dede || of grete synnes outwarde || [299] wherfore I seie that suche wikked delites / & wikked thoughtes / ben subtile begillours of hem that shullen be dampned / [300] More-ou*er*e a man oughte to sorowe for his wikked wordes / as wel as for his wikked dedes || ffor c*er*tes the repentaunce of a singuler synne / and nought repent of al his other synnes or ellis repente him of alle his other synnes / & nat of a singuler synne / may nought̄ availe || [301] ffor c*er*tes almyghti god is al good / And therfore he for-yevith al / or elles right̄ nought̄ / [302]
¶ Austyne. And herof seith seint Austyne / I wote c*er*teynly [303] that god is enemy to eu*er*y synne / And how than he that observith . oo synne shal he haue foryeuenesse of the

remenaunt of his other synnes / Nay / [304] And ferther ou*er*e contricion sholde be wonder sorowful / & anguysshous / & therfore yevith hi*m* god pleynly his m*er*cy / And therfore whan my soule was anguysshous withinne me / I had remembraunce of god / that my prayere myghte come to him / [305] fforther ou*er*e contricion must be contenuel / & that man haue stedfast p*ur*pos to shriven him / & for to amende him of his liff / [306] ffor sothely whiles contricion lasteth̄ man may [1] haue hope of foryeuenesse / And of this cometh hate of synne / that distroyeth synne in him selff / & eke in other folke / as to his powere / [307] ffor whiche seith Dauid / ye that louen god / hateth̄ wikkednesse / ffor ¶ Dauid trusteth wel to love god / is for to love that he loueth / & hate that he hateth̄ ||

[308] The laste thing that men shulle vnderstonde in contricion is this / wherof avayleth̄ contricion / I seye that somtyme contricion delyu*er*eth̄ a man from synne / [309] off whiche that Dauid seith̄ / I seye q*uo*d Dauid ¶ Dauid that is to seie / I p*ur*posed fermely to shrive me and thow lord relesedist my synne / [310] And right so as contricion availeth nought withoute sadd p*ur*pos of shriffte / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] or satisfaccion withoute contricion / [311] And more-ou*er*e contricion distroyeth the prison of helle / & maketh weyke & febleth̄ the strengethes of the deueles / & restoreth̄ the yifftes of the holy goste & of alle goode v*er*tues / [312] & clensith the soule of synne / & delyu*er*eth the soule fro the peyne of helle / & fro the companye of the deuel / & fro the seruage of synne / & restoreth to alle goodes espirituels / & to the companye of communyon of holy chirche / [313] And ferther-ou*er*e hit makyth hi*m* that was whilom the sone of synne / & Ire / to ben the sone of grace / & alle these thinges ben p*re*ved bi holy writte / [314] And therfore he that wol sette his entent to these thinges / he were ful

wise / ffor sothe he sholde nought than in al his liff haue corage to synne / but yeve his body / & al his herte to the *ser*uice of Ih*es*u criste / & therof don him homage / [315] ffor sothly oure swete lord Ih*es*u criste he sparith vs so debonerly in oure folies / that if he ne had pite of man-is soule / a sori songe myghte we alle synge /

Explicit *p*rima p*ar*s penitencie / ¶ & seq*u*itur *secun*da.

[316]

The secunde parte of penaunce / is confession / that is signe of contricion / [317] Now shulle ye vnderstonde what is confession / And whether hit oughte nedes to ben or noon / & whiche thinges ben couenable to verry confession /

[318] ffirst shalt thow vnderstonde that confession is verry shewynge of synnes to the preste / [319] That is to sey verry / that he mote confessen him / of alle the condicions that be-longen [1] to his synne / as ferforth as he can / [320] al mote be seide / & no thi*n*g excused ne hidde / ne for-wrapped / & nought auaunte him of his goode werkes / [321] And fer-ther-ou*er*e it is necessarie to vnderstonde / whens that synnes springen / & how thei encresen / and whiche they ben

¶ Poule. [322] of the springyng of synnes / as seith seint Poule on this wise / That right as bi a man synne entred in-to this world first / & thorugh that synne deide / right so thilke deth entreth in-to alle men that synneden [323] And this man was Adam / bi whom the synne entred in-to this world / whan that he breke the commaundeme*n*t of god / [324] And therfore he that first was so myghti / that he sholde nat haue deide / bi-cam suche oon that he most nedes deye / whether he wolde or noon / & al his p*ro*genye that is in this worlde / that in thilke man*er*e synnen || [325] Loke that in the estate of innocence / whan Adam & Eue

naked were in paradise / & nothing ne hadden shame of here nakednesse / [326] how that the serpent that was moste wyly of al other bestes that god had maked seide to the womman || Commaunded god to yow / ye sholde nought eten of euery tre in paradise / [327] The woman answerde / of the fruyte quod she of the trees in paradise we feden vs / but sothly of the fruyte of the tre that is in the myddel of paradise / god forbede vs / for to eten ne to touche it / lest perauenture we sholden deye / [328] The serpent seide to the woman / nay nay / ye shol not deye of deth / ffor sothe god wote / that what day ye eten therof youre eyghen shul open / & ye shul be as godes knowynge goode & harme / [329] The woman saw that the tre was goode to fedynge / & faire to the eyghe / & dilectable to the sighte / she toke of the fruyte of the tre & ete of it || & yaf it to hir housbond & he ete / And anoon the eyghen of hem bothe opened / [330] And whan that they knewe / that thei weren naked / thei sowed of fyge leves in manere of breches to hiden here membres || [331] Here may ye se that dedly synne hath first suggestion of the fende / as shewith here bi the adder / & affterward the delite of the flesshe / as shewith here bi Eua / And affter that the consentinge of the reson / as shewith bi Adam / [332] ffor trusteth [1] wel though so were that the fende tempted oon / that is to seie / the flesshe / And the flesshe had delite in the beaute of the fruyte defended || yit certes til that reson / that is to seie Adam consented to the etyng of the fruyte / yit stode thei in the highe state of Innocence || [333] Off thilke Adam toke we thilke synne origynal / for of him flesshely discended ben we alle / & engendred of vile & corrupte matire / [334] And whan the soule is put in-to oure body / right anoon is contracte original synne / And that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence / is afterward both peyne & synne / [335] And therfore ben we alle I-borne sones of

¶ Adam. Eua.

wrathe & of dampnacion p*er*durable / if it nere baptyme that we receiven / whiche bynemyth̃ vs the culpe / but for sothe the peyne dwellith̃ with vs / as the temptacion / whiche peyne high̃t concupiscence / [336] And this concupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed / or ordeyned in man / hit makith him coueite couetise of flesshely synne bi sight of his eygh̃en / and to erthely thinges / And eke coueitise of high̃nesse bi pride of herte /

[337] Now as for to speke of the first coueitise / that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres / that weren lawfully maked / & bi righ̃tful iugement of god / [338] I seie for-asmeche as man is nough̃t obeisaunt to god / that is his lord / Therfore is his flesshe to him disobeisaunte / thorugh concupiscence / [. . . . .
. . . . . .
[339] . . . . . .
. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] hit is impossible but he be distemp*er*ed somtyme / & noyede in his flesshe to synne / [340] & this thing may nough̃t faile / as longe as he leueth̃ / it may wexe feble & faile / bi v*er*tu of baptime / & bi the grace of god / thorugh penaunce / [341] but fully shal it neu*er*e quenche / that he ne shal so*m*tyme be meved in him silff || but if he were refreynede bi
[1 *sic*] sikenesse / [1]of bi malifice of sorcerie / or colde drynkes /
¶ Poule. [342] ffor what seith seint Poule / The flesshe coueiteth ayeine the spirit / & the spirit ayeine the flesshe / thei ben so cont*ra*rie / & so striven / that a man may nough̃t don alwey / as he wolde / [343] The same seith seint Poule / after his grete penaunce in wat*er* & in lande / In water bi nigh̃t & bi daie in grete p*er*ile / & grete peyne / In lande in famyne / thruste / in colde and in [2]clothes wantynge / & ones stoned almost to the dethe [344] yit seide he alas I caytiff man / who shal delyuer me fro the prison
¶ Ierome of my caytiff body / [345] And seint Ierome whan he longe tyme had woned in deserte / where as he had no companye but bestes / where as he had

no mete but erbes / & water to his drinke / ne no bedde but the naked erthe / ffor whiche his flesshe was blak as an Ethiopen for hete & nygh̄ distruyed for colde / [346] yit seide he that the brennynge of lecherie boiled in al his body / [347] wherfore I woote wel sekerly that thei ben disceived / that seine / that thei ne ben nought tempted in here body / [348] wittenesse of seint Iame thappostel / ¶ Iacobus. that seith that eu*er*y wigh̄t is tempted in his owne concupiscence / that is to seie / that eu*er*yche of vs hath̄ matire & occasion to be tempted / of the norisshinge of synne that is in his body || [349] And therfore seith seint Ioh̄n ¶ Iohn Eu*ang*. the Eu*a*ngelist if that we seyne that we ben withouten synne we disceiven oure silff / & trouthe is nough̄t in vs /

[350] Now shol ye vnderstonde in what man*er*e synne wexeth & encreseth̄ in man || The first thing is the norisshinge of synne / of which̄ I spak of bifor*n*e thilke flesshely concupiscence / [351] And after that cometh̄ the suggestion of the Deuel / this is to seie the deuel-is bely / with which̄ he blowith̄ in man / the fire of flesshely concupiscence / [352] And aft*er* that a man bithinketh him / whether he wol do or noon thilke thinge / to which̄ he is tempted || [353] And than if a man with-stande / & weive the firste entisinge of his flessh̄ / & of the fende / than is hit no synne / And if so be that he do nat so / than felith̄ he anoon / a flamme of delite / [354] & than is hit goode to be-ware & kepe him wel / or elles he wol falle anoon / in-to consentynge of synne / & than wol he do hit / if he may haue tyme and place || [355] And of this matire seith Moyses bi ¶ Moyses. the deuel in this man*er*e / The fende seith I wol chace & pursue man bi wikked suggestiones / & I wol hente him / bi movynge or sterynge of synne / And I wol dep*ar*te my prise or my preye bi deliberacion / & my lust shal be accomplesshed in delite / I wol drawe my swerde in consentynge / [356] ffor [1]certes righ̄t as a swerde dep*ar*teth̄ a thinge in two peces || Right

so consentynge dep*ar*teth̄ god fro man / And than wol I sle him with myn honde / in dethe of synne / thus seith the fende / [357] ffor certes than is a man al dede in soule / and thus is synne complesshed bi temptacion / bi delite / & bi consentinge / and than is synne cleped actuel /

[358] Ffor sothe synne is in two man*er*es / outher it is venial synne / or dedly synne / Sothely whan man loueth̄ any creature / more than ih*es*u criste oure creatoure / than is it dedly synne / And venial synne is if man loue ih*es*u criste lesse than him oughte || [359] ffor sothe the dede of this venial synne / is ful p*er*ilous / ffor hit amennseth̄ the loue that men sholde haue to god more & more / [360] And therfore if a man charge more him silff / with many suche venial sinnes / certes but if it so be / that he somtyme discharge him of hem bi shriffte / thei may ful lightly amennse in him al the loue / that he hath to ih*es*u criste / [361] & in this wise skippith̄ venial synne / in-to dedly synne || ffor c*er*tes the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial synnes / the more is he enclyned to falle in dedly synne / [362] And therfore lat vs not be necligent to discharge vs of venial synnes / ffor the p*rouer*be seith̄ That many smale makith a grete / [363] And herke*n* this ensample / A grete wawe of the see / cometh somtyme with so grete a violence / that hit drenchith the shippe / And the same harme doth̄ somtyme / the smale dropes of water / that entren thorugh a litil crevise / in-to the thurroke / & in-to the botme of the shippe / if men be so necligent / that men ne discharge hem nought be tyme || [364] And therfore al-though ther be a difference bitwene these two causes of drenchynge / algates the shipp*e* is dreynte || [365] Right so farith hit somtyme of dedly synne / & of anoyous venial synnes / whan thei multiplie in a man so gretly / that thilke worldly thinges that he loueth̄ / thorugh whiche he synneth venially / is as grete in his herte / as the loue of god or more / [366]

¶ prou*er*bium.

prou*er*bium. [*in a late hand.*]

And therfore the loue of eu*er*y thinge / that is not bisette in god / ne don principally for godis sake / al-though a man loue it lasse than god / yit is it venial synne / [367] And dedly synne is / whan the loue of any thinge [1]weyeth in the herte of a man / as meche as the loue of god or more / [368] Dedly synne as seith seint Austyne ¶ Austyne is whan a man turneth his herte from god / whic[h]e that is verry sou*er*eyne bounte / that may nat chaunge / & yevith his herte to a thinge that may chaunge / & flitte || [369] And c*er*tes that is eu*er*y thinge saue only god of heuen || ffor sothe is / if that a man yeve his loue / the whiche that he owith al to god / with al his herte / vn-to a creature / c*er*tes as meche of his loue as he yevith [. . . .] to that creature / so meche he birevith from god / [370] & therfore doth he synne / ffor he that is dettour to god / ne yeldeth nought al his dette to god / that is to seine al the loue of his herte /

[371] Now sithen that a man vnderstondeth gen*er*ally whiche is venial synne || Than is it couenable to tellen of special sinnes whiche that many a man p*er*auenture demeth hem no synnes / ne shriven hem nat of the same thinges / & yit natheles thei ben synnes / [372] sothely as these clerkes writen / this [is][2] to seine / that eu*er*y tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than sufficeth to the sustenaunce of his body / in c*er*teine he doth synne / [373] And eke whan he speketh more than hit nedith / it is sinne || Eke whan he herkeneth nought mekely the compleynte of the pore || [374] Eke whan he is in hele of body & wol nought faste / whan other men faste withouten cause resonable || Eke whan he slepeth more than him nedith || or whan he cometh bi thilke encheson late to chirche / or to other good werkes of charite / [375] Eke whan he vsith his wiff / withouten sou*er*eyne desire of engendrure to the honour of god / or for thentent to yelde to his wiff the the (*sic*) dette of his body / [376] Eke whan he wol nought visite the sike / or p*r*isoners whan he may ||

[2 a word (*is*?) erased here.]
¶ no*ta* bene

Eke if he loue wiff or childe or any worldly thinge / more than reson requirith / Eke if he flatre or blandisshe / more than him oughte / for any necessite || [377] Eke if he amennseth or withdrawith the almes of the pore || Eke if he apparaileth his mete more deliciously than nede is / or ete hit to hastily bi likerousnesse || [378] Eke if he telle vanitees at the chirche or in godes *ser*uise / or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folie / or of vilonye / for he shal yelde accou[m]ptes of it at the daie of dome / [379] Eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do thinges / that he may not [1] p*er*forme || Eke whan that bi lightnesse of folie misseieth or scorneth his neighbour / [380] Eke whan he hath any susspecion of thinge / there as he woote of it no soth-fastnesse || [381] These thi*n*ges & mo withouten nombre ben synnes as seith seint Austi*n*

¶ ydel wordes.

¶ Austyne.

[382] Now shul men vnderstonde that al be it so / that noon erthely man may eschewe al venial synnes / yit may he refreyne him bi the brennynge loue that he hath to oure lorde Ih*es*u criste / & bi praiere / & bi confession / & other goode workes / so that it shal but litel greve / [383] ffor as seith seint Austyne || If a man loue god / in suche man*er*e / that al that eu*er*e he dothe is in the loue of god / or for the loue of god verrily || ffor he brenneth in the loue of god || [384] loke how meche meche that a drope of wat*er* that fallith in a furneys ful of fire anoyeth or grevith / so meche a venial synne is vn-to a man / that is p*er*fite in the love of oure lord ih*es*u criste || [385] Men may also refreyne venial synne / bi the resseivinge of the p*re*cious body of ih*es*u criste / [386] bi resseivinge eke of holy wat*er* / bi almes-dede / bi the gen*er*al confession of the Confiteor at the masse / & at the Complyne / and bi blissinge of Busshopes / and of prestes & bi other goode werkes /

De septem peccatis mortalibus & eorum &c

[387] NOw is it bihouely thinge / to tellen whiche ben the .vij. dedly synnes / that is to seyne cheveteynes of synnes / but alle thei renne in Ooles / but in dyuers maners / Now ben thei cleped cheveteynes / for-as-meche as thei ben cheff / & of hem springen alle other synnes / [388] of the rote of these .vij. sinnes / than is pride the general rote of alle harmes / ffor of this rote springen certeine branches / as Ire / Enuye / accidie / or slouthe / Auarice / or couetise to comune vnderstonding / Gloteneye / & Lecherie / [389] And euerych of these cheff synnes hath his branches & his twigges / as shal be declared in here chapitres folwynge /

[*Of Pride, and its Twigs.*]

[390] And though so be that no man can vtterly telle the nombre of the twigges & of the harmes that comyn of pride / yit wol I shewe a parte of hem as ye shul vnderstonde [391] || There is Inobedience || Avauntynge / Ypocrisie || Despite || Arrogaunce / In[1]prudence || Swellinge of herte || Insolence || Elacion || [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] Partinacie || Veynglorie || & many a-nother twigge that I can nat declare || [392] Inobedient is he / that disobeyeth for dispite to the commaundement of god / & to his souereynes / & to his gostly fader || [393] Auauntour is he that bosteth of the harme or of the bounte / that he hath don / [394] ypocrisie is he that hideth him / to shewe him / suche as he is / and shewith him suche as he is not || [395] Dispitous is he that hath disdeine of his neighbours / that is to seine / of his euen cristen / or hath dispite to do / that him oughte to do || [396] Arrogaunt is he / that thinketh that he hath thilke bounte in him / that he hath nought / or

¶ Inobedient

¶ Auauntour

¶ Dispitous

¶ Arrogaunt.

weneth that he sholde haue hem bi his desertes / or ellis that he weneth that he be that he nys nought / [397] Inpudent is he that for his pride hath no shame for his synne || [398] Swell*ing* of herte is he / whan a man reioyseth him / of harme that he hath don || [399] Insolent is he / that dispiseth in his iugement alle other folke / as to the regarde of his value / & of his connynge / & of his spekynge / & of his berynge || [400] Elacion is / whan he may neither suffre to haue maister ne felawe || [401] Impacient is he / that wol nought be taughte ne vndernome of his vice / & bi striff werreth trouthe wetingly / & maynteneth his folie || [402] Contymax is he that thorugh his indignacion / is ayeins eu*er*yche autorite or power of hem that ben his sou*er*eynes || [403] P*re*sumpcion is he / whan a man taketh an emprise / that hi*m* ought not to do / or ellis he may it not do / & that is called surquidrie || Irreu*er*ent is whan a man doth not honour / there-as him oughte to do / & waiteth to be reu*er*ensed || [404] P*er*tynacy is whan a man defendith his folie / & trusteth to meche his owne witte || [405] Vayneglorie is for to haue pompe / & delite in temporel richesse / & glorifieth hem in worldly estates || [406] Iangelynge is / whan a man speketh to meche / to fore folke & clappeth as a Mille / & taketh no kepe what he seith

¶ Inpudent

¶ Swellinge of herte.

¶ Insolent.

¶ Elacion

¶ Impacient

¶ Contymax

¶ Presumpcion

¶ Irreu*er*ent

¶ p*er*tynacy

¶ Vayngloric

¶ Iangelynge.

[1][407] and yit is there a prive spice of pride / that waiteth first to be halowed / er he wol be saluwed / al be he lasse worth than that other is p*er*auenture / & eke waiteth or desireth to sitte or to go above / him in the weie / or kisse pax / or be ensensed / or go to offringe / to fore his neighboure || [408] & suche [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] a proude desire to be magnified / & honoured bifore the peple ||

[409] Now ben ther two man*er*s of pride / that oon of hem is withinne the herte of man / & that

other is withoute / [410] off whiche sothely the forseide thinges & mo than I haue seide ap*er*tynent to pride / that is in the herte of man / And therto other spices of pride ther ben withoute / [411] but natheles oon of these spices of p*r*ide is signe of that other || Right as the gay levesel at the tauernes is signe of the wyne / that is in the seler || [412] And this is in many thinges / as in speche / & in contena*n*ces / & in outrageous aray of clothinge / [413] ffor certes if it nadde be no synne / in clothinge / Criste wold nought so soone haue noted & spoke of the clothinge / of thilke riche man in the gospel || [414] And as seint Gregorie seith That p*re*cious clothe is coupable / for the derth of hit / & for his softenesse / & for his strangenesse / & for his disgisinesse / & for the sup*er*fluyte / or for the inordynaunte scantnesse / [. . . [415] ¶ Gregorie.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]

[416] As to the first synne / that is in sup*er*fluyte of clothi*n*g whiche that makith hit so dere / to harme of the peple / [417] nat onely the coste of enbroudyng / the degise endentyng or barryng / owndyng / palyng / or bendynge / & semblable waste of clothynge / in vanite || [418] But ther is also costlewe furrynge in here gownes / so meche pounsyng of cheseles to make hooles / so meche daggynge of sheres / [419] forth with the sup*er*fluyte in lengthe of the forseide gownes / trail*i*ng in the donge / & in the myre / on hors & eke on foote / as wel of man / as of womman / that al thilke trailynge is verrily as in effecte wasted & consumed / thredbare & roten / with donge / rather than it is yoven to the pore / to grete damage of the forseide pore folke / [420] & that in sondry wise || this is to seie / the more that clothe is wasted / the more mot hit coste to the peple / for the scarsenesse || [421] [1] And forther-ou*er* if it so be that thei wolde yeven suche pounsed &

dagged clothinge / to the pore folke / it is nought conuenient to were for here estate / ne sufficeaunt to bete here necessite / to kepe hem from the distemperaunce of the colde firmament || [422] On that other side to speke of the disordinat scantnesse of clothing / as ben these cutted sloppes or hanse lynes that thorugh here shortnes ne couerren not there shameful membres of man / to wikked entent / [423] Allas some of hem shewen the shappe & the boce / of the orrible swollen membres / that semeth I-like to the maladie of hirnya in the wrapping of here hoses / [424] and eke the buttokes of hem that faren / as it were the hinder parte of a she Ape / in the ful of the moone / [425] And more-ouer the wreched swolle membres / that thei shewe thorugh disgisyng / in departynge of here hoses white & rede / semeth that halff here privy membres were flayne / [426] And if so be that thei departen here hoses in other colours / as is white & black / or white & blewe / or blak & rede / & so forthe / [427] than semeth hit as bi variaunce of coloure / that halff the partie of his priue membres ben corrupte / bi the fire of seint Antonye or bi Cancre / or bi suche other meschaunces / [428] Yit of the hinder parte of here buttokes / it is ful orrible to se / ffor certes in that partie of here bodie / there as thei purgen here stinkynge ordure / [429] that foule parte shewe thei vnto the peple / proudely / in dispite of honeste / whiche honeste Ihesu crist & his frendes obserued to shewe in his liff / [430] Now as to outrageous aray of wommen / god woot though the visages of hem semen ful chaste / & debonayre / yit notefien thei in there araye / in atire of likerousnesse & pride / [431] I seie nat that honeste in clothinge of man / & woman is vncouenable / But certes the superfluyte / or the disordinat scantnesse of clothinge / is reprovable / [432] Also the synne of an ornement / or apparaile / as in thinges that apperteynen to ridynge / as in to many delicate horses that ben hold-

en for delite / that ben so faire fatte / and costelewe / [433] And also many a vicious knave I-mayntened [1]bicause of hem // And in to curious harneyse / as in sadels cropers / peitresles / bridles cou*er*ed with p*re*cious clothinge & riche barres / & plates / of golde & of siluer / [434] ffor whiche god seith bi Zakarie the p*ro*phete / I wol confounde the riders of suche horses / [435] This folke taken litel rewarde of the ridynge of god-is sone of heuen / & of his harneys whan he rode vppon the Asse / & had noon othir harneys but the clothes of his pore disciples / Ne we rede nat that eu*er* he rode on other beste / [436] I speke thus of the sinne of sup*er*fluite / & nat for the resonable honeste / whan reson it requirith // [437] And forther ou*er*e / certes p*ri*de is gretely notefied in holdynge of grete meyne / whan thei ben of litel p*ro*fite / or rig̃ht of no p*ro*fite / [438] & namely whan meyne is vileynous & damageous to the peple / bi hardynesse of hig̃h lordship*pe* or bi wey of office // [439] ffor c*er*tes suche lordes sellen than here lordshippes to the deuel of helle / whan thei sustene the wikkednesse of here meyne // [440] Or elles whan these folke of lowe degre / as tho that holden hosteleries / & that is many man*er*e of folke / that susteynen theffte / for here Ostelers / & that is in man*er*e of disseites / [441] thilke man*er*e of folke ben the flyes of felonye that folewen the hony / or elles the houndes that folowen the careyne / suche forseide folke strangelen sp*irit*uely here lordshippes // [442] ffor whiche thus seith Dauid the p*ro*phete wikked dethe mote come to thilke lordshippes / & god yeue that thei mowe descende a-doun̄ in-to helle / ffor in here houses ben iniquitees & shrewdenesse & not god of heuen / [443] And c*er*tes but if thei do amendement / rig̃ht so as god yaff his beneson to kyng Pharao bi the service of Iacob / and to Laban bi the s*er*uise of Ioseph rig̃ht so god wol yeue his malison to suche lordshippes / as susteyne the wikkednesse / of here s*er*uauntes / but thei

¶ Zakarias.

¶ Dauid

come to amendement // [444] Pride of the table appereth̄ eke ful offte / for certes riche men ben cleped to festes & pore folke ben put aweye / & rebuked [445] also in excesse of diuers metes & drinkes / & namely suche manere of bake [1] metes & dissh̄ metes / brennynge in wilde fire / & peynted & castelled with papire / & in semblable waste / so that hit is abusion for to thenke / [446] & eke in the grete preciousnesse of vessel & curiousite of mynstralcie / bi the whiche a man is stered the more to delites of luxurie / [447] if so be that he sette his herte the lasse on oure lord Ihesu criste / certeyne it is sinne / And certeynely the delites myghten be so grete in this case that men myghte lightly falle bi hem in-to dedly synne // [448] The espices that sourden of pride / sothely whan thei sourden of malice ymagened / avised or a fore caste / or elles of vsage ben dedly synnes it is no doute / [449] And whan thei sourden bi freelte vnavised sodenly / & sodenly withdrawe ageyne / al be thei greuous synnes / I gesse that thei ben nought dedly / [450] Now myghte men axe / wherof that pride sourdeth & springeth / & I seie somtyme hit springeth̄ of the goodis of nature / & somtyme of the goodis of fortune / and somtyme of the goodis of grace / [451] Certes the goodis of nature / stonden in the goodis of bodye / or goodis of soule / [452] Certes the goodis of bodye / ben hele of bodie / strengthe / delyuernesse / beaute / genterie / ffranchises /

¶ Goodis of nature. [453] Goodis of nature of the soule / ben goodis with sharpe vnderstondynge / subtile engyne / vertu naturel / good

¶ Goodis of fortune memorie / [454] Goodis of fortune ben richesse / high degrees of lordshippes / preisinges of the peple // [455]

¶ Goodis of grace. Goodis of grace ben scienses / power to suffre / spirituel travaile / benyngnitees / vertuous contemplacion / with-stonding of temptacion / & semblable thinges / [456] of whiche foreseide goodis / certes hit is a ful grete folie a man to pride him in any of hem alle // [457]

Now as for to speke of godis of nature / god wot that somtyme we haue hem in nature / als meche to oure damage / as to oure profite [458] And for to speke of hele of bodie / certes it passeth ful lightly / & eke hit is ful offte encheson of sikenesse of the soule / ffor god woot the flesshī is a ful grete enemy to the soule / and therfore the more the bodie is hoole / the more ben we in perel to falle / [459] Eke for to pride him / in his strengthe of bodie / hit is an highe folye / ffor certes the flesshe coueiteth ageine the spirit / [1]and ay the more stronge the flesshī is / the soriere may the soule be / [460] And ouer al this / strengthe of bodie / & worldly hardinesse / causith ful offte many a man to perel & meschaunce / [461] Eke for to pride him in his gentrie / is a ful grete folie / ffor often tyme the gentrie of the bodie / bigynneth the gentrie of the soule / and eke we alle ben of on fader & of on moder / & alle we ben of oo nature roten & corrupte / riche & pore / [462] ffor sothe a manere of gentrie it is to preise that apparellith mannes corage / with vertues & moralitees / & makith him cristes childe / [463] ffor trusteth wel that ouer what man / that synne hath maistrie / he is verry chorle to synne /

[464] Now ben ther general thinges of gentillesse / as eschewynge of vices / or rebaudrie / & seruage of synne / In worde / in werke / & contenaunce / [465] & vsyng vertu / curtesie / and clennesse / & to be liberal / that is to seie large bi mesure / ffor that that passith mesure / is folie & synne / [466] Another is to remembre him / of bounte / that he of other folke hath receivede / [467] Another is to be benigne / to his goode subiectes / wherfore as seith Seneca / ther nys nothing more ¶ Seneca. couenable to a man of highī estate / than debonarte & pite / [468] And there [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] bees whan thei chese hem a kyng / thei chesen him that hath no prikke to stynge with // [469]

Another is a man to haue a noble herte / & a diligent to atteyne to highe vertues thinges / [470* *see after* 471; *and note the transposing of the clauses in* 472 . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*]
[471] Certes also who that prideth him / in the goodes of fortune / he is a ful grete foole / ffor somtyme is a man a ful grete lorde bi the morowe / that is a wreche & a caitiff / or it be nighť / [*470] Now certes a man to pride him in the goodes of grace / is eke outragious folie / ffor the yifftes of grace / that shold haue turned him to goodnesse / & to medicyne / turneth him to venym & to confusion / as seith seint Gregorie / [472] And somtyme the delites of man ben the cause of his grete maladie of whiche he deyeth / And somtyme the riches of a man is cause of his dethe / [473] Certes the commendacion of the peple is sumtyme ful fals / & ful brotel for to truste also / this daie thei preise to morne thei lakke / [474] God woote desire to [1]haue commendacion eke of the peple hath caused deth to many a besy man / [475] Now sithens that so is that ye haue vnderstonden what is pride / & whiche ben the spices of it / & whence pride sourdeth & springeth

¶ Gregorie.

Remedium contra peccatum superbie.

[476] NOw shal ye vnderstonde / whic[h]e is the remedie ayeines the synne of pride and that is humilite or mekenesse / [477] that is a vertu / thorugh whiche a man hath verry knewleche of him silff / & holdith of him silff / no pris ne deynte / as in regarde of his desertes considring euere his freelte // [478] Now ben ther thre maners of humilite / as humilite in herte / Another humilite is in mouthe / The thride is in werkes / [479] The humilite in herte / is in foure maners / that on is whan a man ne holdith him silff nought worth bifore god of heuen / Another is whan he dispisith

noon other man / [480] The thride is / that he rekketh nat though men holde him nought worthe / The ferthe is whan he is nat sory / of his humyliacion / [481] Also the humilite of mouthe is in foure thinges / In attempre speche / & in humble speche / and whan he biknowith with his owne mouth that he is suche / as him thinketh that he is in his herte / another is whan he preisith the bounte of another man / & no thing therof amennsith [482] humilite / Eke humilite in werkes is in foure maners / the firste is whan he putteth other men biforne him / the seconde is / to chese the loweste place ouer al / the thrid is gladly to assente to good counsaile / [483] the fourthe is gladly to stonde to the worde of his souer aignes / or of him that is in highere degre than he / & this is a grete werke of humylite //

De inuidia.

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[484] After pride wol I speke of the foule synne of envie / whiche that is / as bi the wordes of the Philosophre sorowe of other mannes prosperite / and after the worde of seint Austyne / hit is sorowe of other mennes wele / & ioye of othe[r] men-is harme / [485] This foule synne is platly ayeine the holy goste / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] yit natheles for-asmeche that bounte apperteyneth properly to the holy gost / And envie cometh properly of malice / therfore it is properly ayeines the bounte of the holy goste // [486] Now hath malice two [1]spices / that is to seie hardnesse / & wikkednesse / or elles the flesshe of a man / that is so blinde that he considreth nought that he is in synne / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] whiche is the hardnesse of the deuel // [487] That other spice of malice is / whan that a man werreieth trouth / whan that he woote that hit is trouth / & eke whan he werreieth the grace that god hath yive / to his ¶ Austyne.

neighbour / and al this is bi envie / [488] Certes than is envie the worste synne that is / ffor sothely alle other synnes ben sumtyme ayeines .o. special vertu / [489] but certes envie is ayeines alle special vertues / & ayeines al goodnesse / for it is sory of al the bountees of his neighbour / And in this manere it is diuerse from al other synnes / [490] ffor wel vnnethe is ther any other synne / that hit ne hath sum delite in him silff / saue only envie / that euer hath in him selff angvisshe & sorowe / [491] The spices of envie ben these / ther is first sorowe / of other mennes / goodnesse / & of here prosperite / whiche is kindely matire of ioye / than is envie a synne ayeins kynde / [492] The secounde spice of envie / is ioye of other men-is harme / & that is properly like to the Deuel / that euer reioyseth him of man-is harme / [493] Of these two spices cometh bagbitynge / [. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] or detraccion hath twey spices / as thus / Somme man preisith his neighbour / bi a wikked entente / [494] for he makith alwey a wikked knotte at the laste ende / alwey he makith a butte at the laste ende / that is digne of more blame than worth is al the preisinge / [495] The secounde spice is / that if a man be good / & doth & seith al thing to good entente / The bagbiter wol turne al the goodnesse vp so doun / to his shrewede entente / [496] The thride is to amennse the bounte of his neighbour / [497] The ferthe spice of bagbityng is this / That if men speke goodnesse of a man / than wol the bakbiter seie perfay / suche a man is better than he / in dispreisinge of him that men preise / [498] The .v. spice is this / for to consente gladly & herken the harme that men speke of other folke / this is ful grete / & ay encreseth after the wikked entente of the bakbiter || [499] Affter bakbityng cometh grucchinge or murmuracion / & somtyme it springeth [1]of inpacience ayeines god / & somtyme ayeines man /

[500] ayeines god it is / whan a man / groccheth̄ ayeines the peyne of helle / or ayeines pou*er*te / of losse of catel / or ayeines reyne or tempest / or ellis grucchen for shrewen haue p*ro*sp*er*ite / or good men ad-u*er*site / [501] & al these thinges sholde men suffre paciently / for thei comen bi the rightful iugement and ordynaunce of god / [502] Somtyme cometh̄ grocching of avarice as Iudas grucched ayeines the Magdaleyne / whan she anoynted the hede of oure lorde Ih*es*u criste / with hir p*re*cious oynement / [503] This man*er*e murmur is suche / as whan men grocchen of goodnesse / that hem silff don / or that other folke don̄ / of here owne catal / [504] Somtyme cometh̄ m*ur*mur of pride / as whan Symon the Phareseie grucched ayeines the Magdaleyne / whan she approchede to Ih*es*u criste / & wepte at his feete for hir synnes / [505] And somtyme hit sourdeth̄ of envie / whan men discou*er*en a man-is harme / that was p*r*iue / or bereth̄ him on honde thinge that is fals // [506] Murmur is eke offte amonge s*er*uauntes / that grucchen whan here sou*er*eynes bidden hem to don leueful thinges / [507] and for als meche as thei dar nat openly ayeine seie the commaundement of here sou*er*eignes / yit wol thei seie harme / & grucche / & m*ur*mur p*r*iuely for verry dispite / [508] whiche wordes men clepen the Deuels Pat*er* noster / though so be that the deuel had neu*er*e Pat*er* n*oste*r / but that folke yeve hit suche aname // [509] Somtyme hit cometh of Ire / or of pride & hate / that norisheth rankour in herte / as afterward I shal declare / [510] Than cometh eke bitternesse of herte / thorugh whiche bitternesse eu*er*y good dede of his neighbour / semeth to him bitter & vnsauerie / [511] than cometh̄ discorde / that vnbindeth al man*er*e of frendeship*pe* / Than cometh scornynge of [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] his neighbour / al do he neu*er*e so wel / [512] Than cometh̄ accusyng*e* as whan a man sekith occasion to anoyen his ¶ scornynge. accusynge.

neighbour / whiche that is like the craffte of the deuel / that waiteth both̄ day & nigh̄t to accusen vs alle // [513] Than cometh malignite / thorugh whiche a man / [1] anoyeth his neighbour p*r*iuely if he may / [514] & if he may nat algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante / as for to brenne his hous p*r*iuely / or openly / or slen his bestes / and semblable thinges

Remedium contra peccatum Invidie.

[515] NOw wol I speke of the remedie ayeines this foule synne of envie / ffirst is the loue of god principal / And louynge of his neighbour as him silff / ffor that on may nat be withouten that other / [516] And trusteth wel / that in the name of thi neigh̄bo*ur* thow shalt vnderstonde the name of thi brother / ffor certes alle we haue but O fader flessh̄ly & O moder / that is to seine Adam & Eve / And eke O fader spirituel that is to seie god of heuen / [517] thi neighbour artow holden to loue & willen al goodnesse / And therfore seith god / loue thi neighbour as thi silff / that is to saluacion bothe of bodie & of soule / [518] And more-ou*er*e thow shalt loue him in worde / & in benigne amonesshing & chastising / & comfort him in his anoyes / & pray for him with al thin herte / [519] and in dede thow shalt loue him in suche wise / that thow shalt do to him in charite / as thow woldist hit were don to the in thin owne p*er*sone / [520] And therfore thow ne shalt do to him no damage in wikked worde / ne harme in his bodie / ne in his catel / ne in his soule / bi entisinge of wikked ensample / [521] thow shalt [not] desire his wiff / ne noon of his thinges / vnderstonde eke that in the name of thi neighbour is com-p*r*ehended his enemy / [522] Certes a man shal loue his enemy for the commaundement of god / & soth̄ly thi frende shalt thow loue in god / [523] I seie thin enemy shalt thow loue for godis sake / bi his commaunde-

ment / ffor if hit were reson that man sholde hate his enemy / ffor sothe god wolde nat receive vs to his loue / that ben his enemyes / [524] ayeines thre man*ere* of wronges that his enemy dothh to him / he shal do thre thinges / as thus / [525] ayeines hate & rankour of herte / he shal loue him in herte / ayeine chidi*ng* & wikked wordes / he shal praie for his enemy / ayeine the wikked dede of his enemy / he shal don him bounte // [526] ffor criste [1] seithh / loue youre enemyes / & praye for hem that speke yow harme / & eke for hem that yow chasen / & pursewen / & dothh bounte to hem that yow haten / Lo thus commaundethh vs oure lorde Ih*es*u criste / to do to oure enemyes / [527] ffor sothe nature drivethh vs to loue oure frendes / And p*er*fay oure enemyes han we more nede to loue / than oure frendes / And thei that more nede haue / certes to hem shulde men do more goodnesse / [528] And certes in thilke dede haue we remembraunce of the loue of Ih*es*u criste / that deyed for his enemyes / [529] And for-asmeche as that loue is the more grevous to p*er*forme / so meche is more the grete merite // And therfore the louynge of oure enemyes hathh confounded the venym of the Deuel / [530] ffor right as the Deuel is discomfited bi humilite / Right so is he wounded to the dethe / bi the loue of oure enemyes / [531] Certes than is loue the medicyne that chasethh out the venym of envie / from man-is herte / [532] the spices of this pas shulne be more largely declared in here chapetles folowynge /

De Ira.

[533]

Affter envie wol I declare the synne of Ire / for sothely who that hath envie vppon his neighbo*ur* anoon comunely he wol fynde him a matire of wrathe / in worde or in dede / ayeines him to whom he hathh envie // [534] And as wel comethh Ire / of pride

as of envie / ffor sothely he that is proude or envious / is lightly wrothe /

¶ Austyne

[535] this synne of Ire aft*er* the discrivyng of seint Austyne / Is wikked wil / to ben avengede / bi worde / or bi dede / [536] Ire aft*er* the Philosophre / is the feruent blood of a man / I-quiked in his herte / thorugh whiche he wolde harme to him that he hateth / [537] ffor c*er*tes the herte of a man / bi enchaufynge & mevynge of his bloode / wexeth so trouble / that he is out of al iugement of reson / [538] But ye shul vnderstonde that Ire is in two maners / that on of hem is goode / that other is wikked / [539] The goode Ire is / bi Ielousie of goodnesse thorugh the whiche a man is wrothe / with wikkednesse / & ayeins wikkednesse / And therfore seith th[e] wise man / that Ire is bett than pleye / [540] this Ire is with debonairte and hit is wrothe / withouten bitternesse / nought wroth [1] ayeines the man / but wrooth with the misdede of the man / as seith the

¶ Dauid. Irascimini & nolite peccare &c

p*ro*phete Dauid / Irascimini & nolite peccare / [541] Now vnderstondith that wikked Ire is in two man*er*s / that is to seine / sodeyne Ire / & hastiff Ire withouten avisement / & consentyng of reson / [542] the meny*ng* and the sens / of this is that the reson of a man ne co*n*sente nat to that sodeyne Ire / & than is hit venial / [543] Another Ire is ful wikked / that cometh of vilony of herte avised & cast biforne / with wikked wille to do vengeaunce / & therto his reson consentith / & sothely that is dedly synne / [544] This Ire is so displesaunt to god / that hit troublyth his hous / & chasith the holy goste out of mannys soule / & wasteth & distroieth the likenes of god / that is to seie / the v*er*tu that is in man-is soule / [545] & putteth in hi*m* the likenes of the Deuel / & bynemeth the man from god that is his rightful lord / [546] This Ire is a ful grete plesaunce to the Deuel / for hit is the deuels furneys / that is enchafed with the fire of helle / [547] ffor c*er*tes

right so as the fire is more myghti to distroye erthely thinges / than eny other element / Right so is Ire myghti to distroye alle spirituel thinges / [548] Loke how that fire of smale gledes / that ben almoste dede vnder asshen wolne quiken ayeine / whan thei ben touched with brymstoñ / Right so wol Ire euer more quiken ayeine / whan hit is touched bi the pride that is cou*er*ed in man-is herte / [549] ffor c*er*tes fire ne may not come out of nothinge / but if hit were first in the same thing naturelly / As fire is drawe out of flyntes with steeH / [550] And right so as pride is offten tyme mater of Ire / Right so is rancour*e* / norice & keper of Ire / [551] Ther is a manere tre as seith seint Isodre / that whan men make fire of that tre / & cou*er*e the coles of hit with asshen / sothly the fire of hit wol lasten al a yere / or more / [552] And right so farith hit of rancour*e* / whan he is ones conceived in the hertes of som men / c*er*tes hit wol laste p*er*auenture from on Esterday / til another [. . *no gap in MS.*] or more / [553] But cert*es* that man is ful fer from the m*er*cy of god / al thilke while ||

¶ exemplum.

¶ Isidorus.

[554] In [1] this foreseide deuels fforneys / thei forgen .iij. shrewis Pride that ay blowith & encresith the fire bi chidinges & wikked wordes / [555] Than stondeth Envie & holdeth the hote Iren vppon the herte of man / with a peire of longe tonges of longe rancour / [556] And than stondeth the synne of contumelie or striff / & cheste / & batereth & forgeth bi vileynes reprovynges / [557] Certis this cursed synne anoyeth both the man him-silff / & eke to his neighboure / ffor sothly al-moste al the harme / that any man doth to his neighboure / cometh of wrathe / [558] ffor c*er*tis outrageous wratthe doth al / that eu*er* the deuel him commaundith / ffor he ne sparith neither criste / ne his swete moder / [559] And in his outrageous anger & Ire / allas allas / ful many on that tyme felith in his herte ful wikkedly /

both̄ of criste / & of alle his halowes / [560] Is nat this a cursed vice / yis *cer*tis allas / hit bynemeth fro*m* man his witt / & his reson / & al his debonayre liff spirituel / that shulde kepe his soule / [561] Cert*es* hit bynemeth̄ eke god-is diwe lordship*pe* / & that is man-is soule / & the loue of his neighboure / hit strivith̄ eke alday ayeines trouthe / hit reuyeth him the quiete of his herte / & subu*er*tethe his soule /

[562] Off Ire comen these stinkyng*e* engendrures / ffirst hate that is olde wratthe / discorde thorugh which̄ a man forsaketh his olde frende / that he hath̄ louede ful longe // [563] And than cometh̄ werre / & eu*er*y man*er*e of wronge that man doth̄ to his neighboure in body or in cateH̄ [564] Off this cursed synne of Ire cometh̄ eke manslaughter / And vnderstondeth̄ wel that homycide that is manslaugh̄t*er* / is in diu*er*se wise / Some man*er*e of homicide is spirituel / & some is bodily / [565] Spirituel manslaughter is in .vj. thinges / ffirst bi hate as seith seint Ioh̄n / that he that hateth̄ his brother is an homicide // [566] homicide is eke bi bakbityng / of whiche bakbiters seith̄ Salomon / that thei haue two swerdis with the whiche thei slen here neighboures / for soth̄ly as wikked it is to byneme him his good name / as his liff / [567] Homicide is eke in yeving*e* of wikked consail bi fraude / as for to yeve consail to [1] areise wrongfully custumes & tallages / [568] of whiche seith̄ Salomon / Lyoun rorynge / Bere hungry / ben like to cruel lordshippes / in withholdyng or abreggyng of the sheepe / or of the hyre / or of the wages of s*er*uauntes / or ellis in vsure / or in withdrawynge of almesse / fro the pore folke / [569] for which̄ the wise man seith̄ / ffedith him that almoste deyeth̄ for hungre / for soth̄ly but if thow fede him / thow sleest him / And alle these ben dedly synnes / [570] Bodyly manslaught*er* is whan thow sleest him with thi tonge / in other man*er*e as whan thow commaundist to sle a man / or ellis yevist him consail to sle a

¶ Iohn.

¶ Salomon.

¶ Salomon

man / [571] Manslaught*er* in dede is in .iiij. man*er*s / that on is bi lawe / right as a Iustice dampnetħ him that is coupable / to the dethe / but lat the Iustice be war that he do hit righttfully / & that he do it nat for delite to spille bloode / but for keping of rightwisnesse / [572] Another homicide is doñ for necessite / as whan a man sleetħ another in his defendaunt / & that he ne may non otherwise escape from his owne detħ / [573] but c*er*tis if he may escape withouten detħ of his adu*er*sarie / & sleeth him he dotħ synne / & he shal bere penaunce / as for dedly sinne / [574] Eke if a man bi caas or auenture shete an arowe / or cast a stoñ / with the whiche he sleeth a man hit is homicide / [575] Eke if a woman bi necligence ou*er*lithe hir childe in hir slepinge hit is homicide & dedly synne / [576] Eke whan a man distourbetħ the concepcion of a childe / or maketħ a woman bareyne bi drinkyng of venemous herbes thorugh whiche she may nat conceive / or sleeth a childe bi drynkes / or ellis putteth c*er*teyne mat*er*ial thinges in hir secre place to sle the childe / [577] or ellis doth vnkyndly synne / bi the whiche man or woman shedith there nature in man*er*e or in place / there as a childe ne may nat be conceived / or ellis if a woman haue conceived / and hurtetħ hir silff & sleeth hir childe / yit is it homicide / [578] what seie we eke of women that mordren there children for drede of worldly shame / cert*es* an horrible homicide / [579] Homicide is eke if a man approchetħ to a woman bi desire [1]of lecherie bi the whiche the childe is p*er*isshed / or ellis smytetħ a woman wetingly / thorugħ whiche she lesitħ hir childe / alle these ben homicides & horrible dedly synnes / [580] yit cometħ ther of Ire many mo synnes / as wel in worde / as in thoughtt / & in dede / as he that areccetħ vppon god / or blametħ god of thinge / of whiche he is him-silff gilty / or dispisitħ god & alle his halowes / as don these cursed hasardours /

in diu*er*se contres / [581] this cursed synne don thei / whan thei felen in here herte ful wikkedly of god & his halowis / [582] Also whan thei treten vnreu*er*ently the sacrament of the auter / Thilke synnes ben so grete / that vnnethes may hit ben relessed but that the m*er*cy of god / passith̄ his workes / hit is so grete / & he so benygne / [583] Than cometh̄ of Ire attrie anger / whan a man is sharply amonesshed in his shriffte to forlete synne / [584] than wol he be angry and answere hokerly / & angerly / or defende & excuse his synne bi vnstedfastnesse of his flesshe / or ellis he dide hit / for to holde companye with his felowes / or ellis he seith̄ the fende entised him / [585] or ellis he dide hit for his youthe / Or ellis his complexion is so coragious / that he may nat forbere / Or ellis hit is his destenye / as he seith vn-to a c*er*teyne age / Or ellis he seith hit cometh him of gentilnes of his auncetres / & semblable thinges / [586] Alle these man*er*e of folke so wrappen hem / in here synnes / that thei ne wol nough̄t delyu*er*en hem-silff / ffor soth̄ly no wigh̄te that excusith̄ him of his synne wilfully / may not be delyu*er*ed of his synne / til that he mekely biknowe his synne / [587] Aff*ter* than cometh sweringe / that is expresse ayeines the commaundement of god / & this bifallith̄ offte of anger & of Ire / [588] God seith thow shalt not take the name of thi lord god in veyne ne in ydel / Also
¶ Mathewe. oure lord ih*es*u seith̄ bi the wordes of seint Mathewe / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] [589] Ne wille ye nought to swere in no man*er*e / neither bi heuen for it is godis trone / Ne bi the erthe for hit is the benche of his feete / Ne bi Ierusalem for it is the Cite of a grete kynge / Ne bi thin hede / for it [1] is nat thin owne / for thow maist nat make an heere white ne blak / [590] but seith bi youre ye / ye & nay / nay / And what that is more it is euel / thus seith criste / [591] ffor cristes sake ne swerith̄ nough̄t so synfully / in dismembringe of criste / bi soule

herte / bones / & body / ffor certes it semeth̄ that ye thenke the cursed Iewes dismembred him nough̄t I-nough̄ / [. . *no gap in the MS.*] but ye dismembren him more / [592] And if so be the lawe compelle yow to swere / than shul ye reule yow after the lawe of god in youre swerynge / As seith seint Ierome in .iiij.^the^ chap- ¶ Ierome.
itle / [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] Thow shalt kepe .iij. condicions / thow shalt swere in trouthe / in dome / & in righ̄twisnesse / [593] this is to seyne thow shalt swere sooth̄ / for euery lesing is ayeines criste / ffor criste in verray trouthe / And thenke wel this / That euery grete swerer / nat compelled lawfully to swere / the wounde shal nat departe from his hous / whiles he vsith̄ suche vnlawful swerynge / [594] Thou shalt swere eke in dome / whan thow art constreyned bi the Domesman to wittnesse the trouthe / [595] Eke thou shalt nat swere for envie ne for fauour / ne for mede / but for trouthe & righ̄twisnesse the declaracion of hit to the wourshippe of god / & to helpinge of thin euen cristen / [596] And therfore euery man that taketh̄ the name of god in ydel / or falsly swerith̄ with his mouthe / or ellis taketh on him the name of criste to be called a cristen man / & levith ayeins cristes levynge & his techinge / alle thei taken godis name in ydel / [597] Loke eke what seith seint Peter ¶ Petrus.
Actuum .iiij^to^. Non est aliud nomen sub celo / Ther act .iiij^to^.
nys noon other name seith seint Peter vnder heuen / I-youen to men in whiche thei mowe be saued / that is to seine / but in the name of Ihesu criste / [598] [. . . .
. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] As seith seint Poule / ¶ Paule.
[. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] that in the name of Ihesu euery kne of heuenly creatures / or erthely / or of helle shulle bowe / for hit is so high̄ & so wourshipful / that the cursed fende in helle sholde tremble for to hire hit nempned / [599] Than semeth hit that men that sweren so horribly bi his

blissed name / that thei dispisen it more boldely than diden the cursed Iewes / or ellis the deuel that tremblith whan he hyrith his name /

[600] Now *cer*tis sithe that sweringe but if hit be lawfully don / is so highly defended / meche [1] wors is forsweryng falsly / And yit nedeles

[601] what seie ye of hem / that deliten hem in swering / & holde hit a gentrie / or a manly dede / to swere grete othes / And what of hem that of verry vsage ne sease nat to swere grete othes / al be the cause nought worthe a strawe / cert*es* this is an horrible synne / [602] swering sodonly withoute avisement is eke a synne / [603] Now lat vs go to thilke horrible & cursed swering / of adiuracion & coniuracion / as don these false enchauntours / & nigromansours in basins ful of water / or in a bright swerde / in a cercle / or in a fire / or in a shelderbon of a shepe / [604] I can not seyne but that thei don cursedly / & dampnably / ayeines criste / & al the feith of holy chirche /

¶ swerynges.

[605] what seie we of hem that bileven on divynailles / as bi flight or bi noyse of briddes / or of bestes / or bi sorte bi nigromancie / bi dremes / bi chirkyng of doores / bi gnawynge of rattes / or crakyng of housus / & suche man*ere* of wrecchednesse / [606] c*er*tis al this thinge is defended bi god & holy chirche / for whiche thei ben acursed til thei come to amendement / that in suche filthe setten here bileve / [607] Charmes for woundes / of maladie of men or of bestes / if thei take any effecte / hit may be p*er*auenture / that god suffrith hit / for folke sholde yeve the more feith & reu*er*ence to his name /

¶ Lesynges.

[608] Now wol I speke of lesinges / whiche gen*er*ally is fals signifiaunce of wordes / in entente to disceiven his euen cristen [609] Some lesinge is of whiche ther cometh noon auantage to no wighte / And some lesinge turneth to the ease and p*ro*fite of a man / & to

damage of another man / [610] Another lesinge is for to saue his liff / or his catel / Another lesing cometh of delite for to lye / in whiche delite thei wolne forge a longe tale / & peynte hit with al circumstaunces / wher al the grounde of the tale is fals / [611] Some lesinge cometh for he wol sustene his worde / Some lesing*e* cometh̄ of rechelesnesse withouten avisement / & semblable thinges /

[612] Late vs now touche the vice of flaterynge / the whiche ne cometh̄ nat gladly / but for drede / or for couetise / [613] fflaterie [1]is gen*er*ally wrongeful preisynge / fflaterers ben the deuelis norices / that norisshen his children with mylke of losengerye / [614] ffor soth Salomon seith that flaterie is worse than detraccion / ffor somtyme detraccion maketh an havteyne man / to be the more humble / for he dredith̄ detraccion // But *certes* flaterie makith a man to enhansen his herte & his contenaunce / [615] fflaterers ben the deuelis enchauntours / for thei maken a man to wene of him selff be like / that he is nat like / [616] thei ben like to Iudas that bitrayed [. . . . . *no gap in the MS.*] a man to selle him to his enemy / that is to the deuel / [617] fflatrers ben the deuels Chapeleynes. that singen eu*er*e Placebo / [618] I reken flaterie in the vice of Ire / ffor offt tyme if a man be wroth̄ with a-nother than wol he flatere som wight to sustene him in his quarel /

¶ fflaterynges.

¶ Salomon.

[619] Speke we now of suche cursinge as cometh out of Irons herte / Malison may be seide gen*er*ally / eu*er*y maner power*e* of harme / suche cursing birevith a man fro the regne of god / As seith seint Poule [620] that suche cursinge wrongefully / retorneth̄ oftyn tyme ayeine to him that cursith̄ / as a bridde retorneth ayeine to his ow[ne n]este / [621] And ou*er* al thing men oughte to eschewe to curse here children / & yeven to the deuel there engendrure / as fer forth̄ as in hem is / *cer*tis hit is a grete p*er*ille & a grete synne //

¶ Cursynge

¶ Poule.

[MS. rubbed.]

¶ Chidynge.

[622] Late vs now speke of chidynge & reproche whiche ben grete woundes in man-is herte for thei vn-sewen the seemes of frendeship*pe* in mennes herte / [623] ffor *cer*tis vnnethes may a man ben pleynly accorded with him / that hath him openly reviled / & reproued & disclaundred / this is a ful grysely synne / as criste seith in the gospel / [624] And take kepe now that he that reprovith his neighbour / outher he reprovith hi*m* bi some harme of peyne that he hath in his body / As Mesel. Croked harlott / or bi some synne that he dothe // [625] Now if he reprove him bi harme of peyne / than turneth the repreff to Ih*es*u criste / for peyne is sent bi the rightwis sonde of god / & bi his suffe[1]raunce / be it Meselrie or mayme / or maladie. [626] And if he rep*rov*e him vncharitably / of synne / as thow holour thow dronkelewe harlott / & so forth / than app*er*teyneth that to the reioysing of the deuel / that eu*er* hath ioye that men don synne / [627] And *cer*tis chidynge may not come but of a vileyns herte / ffor after the habundaunce of the herte speketh the mouthe ful offte / [628] And ye shul vnderstonde that loke bi any wey / whan any man shal chastise another / that he be war of chidinge or reproving / ffor truly but he be wer / he may ful lightly queken the fire of anger & of wratthe / whiche that he sholde quenche / and p*er*auenture sleth him that he myghte chastise with benygnite / [629] ffor as seith Salomon the amyable tonge / is the tree of liff / that is to seyne of liff espirituel / And a dislave tonge / sleth the spirites of him that reprovith / and eke of him that is reproved / [630] Lo what seint Austyne seith / ther is nothing so like the deueles childe as he that offte chideth / seint Poule seith eke / I s*er*uaunt of god bihove nought to chide / [631] And how that chiding is a vileyns thing bitwix al man*er*e folke / ȝit is hit *cer*tis most vncovenable bitwixe a man & his wiff / for there is neuer reste /

¶ ex habundancia cordis os loquitur.

¶ Salomon.

¶ Paule.

And therfore seith Salomon / An hous that is vncouered in rayne & droppinge / & a chidynge wiff ben I-like [632] a man that is in a droppinge hous in many places / though he eschewe the droppinge in o place / yit it droppeth on him in a-nother place / so farith hit bi a chidinge wiff / but she chide him in o place / she wol chide him in another / [633] And therfore better is a morssel of brede with ioye / than an hous ful of delites with chidinge / seith Salomon [634] seint Poule seith / O ye women be ye subiectes to youre housbondes / as bihovith in god / And ye men lovith youre wives / as Colonisences .iij°. ¶ Salomon ¶ Ad Colonisenses .iij°.

[635] Affterward speke we of scornynge / whiche is a wikked synne / and namely whan he scornyth a man for his goode workes / [636] ffor certes suche scorners faren I-like the foule toode that may nat endure to smelle the swete sauoure of the vyne / whan it flourith / [637] [1]These scorners ben partynge felawes with the deuel / for thei haue ioye whan the deuel wynneth / & sorowe whan he leseth / that is to seye sauacion of soule / [638] thei ben aduersaries to oure lord ihesu criste / for thei haten that he loveth / that is to seie sauacion of soule /

[639] Speke we now of wikked consail / ffor he that wikked consail yeueth is a traytoure / for he disceiviith him that trusteth in him / vt Achitofel de Absone / But natheles yit is his wikked counsail first ayens him selff / [640] ffor as seith the wise man Euery fals levyng man hath this properte in him selff / that he that wol anoye another man / he anoyeth first him selff / [641] And men shul vnderstonde / that man shal nat take his counsail of fals folke / ne of to angry folke / ne of grevous folke / ne of folke that louen to meche specially here owne profite / ne to meche wordly folke / & namely in consaillynge of soules / ¶ wikked consaille.

[642] Now cometh the synne of hem that sowen & maken discorde / amonges folke / whiche is a synne that ¶ Discorde.

criste hateth vtterly / and no wonder is / for he deyed to make concorde / [643] & more shame do thei to criste / than dide thei that him crucified / ffor loueth better that frendeshippe be amonges folke / than he dide his owne body / whiche that he yaff for vnitees / therfore ben thei likened to the Deuel / that euere is a-boughte to make discorde /

¶ Double tonge. [644] Now cometh the synne of double tonge / suche as speken faire bifore folke / & wikkedly be-hynde / or ellis thei maken sembelaunt / as though thei spake of goode entencion / or elles in game & pleye / & yit thei speken of wikked entent /

¶ bi-wreiynge. of consaille. [645] Now cometh biwreiynge of consail / thorugh the whiche a man is defamed / certes vnnethe may he restore the damages /

¶ Manace [646] Now cometh manas that is an open folye / ffor he that offte manassith / he thretith more than he may do ful offt tyme /

¶ ydel wordes. [647] Now cometh ydel wordes / that is withouten profite / of him that speketh the wordes / & eke of him that herkeneth the wordes / or ellis ydel wordes ben tho that be nedeles / [1]or withouten entente of naturel profite / [648] And al be hit that ydel wordes ben somtyme venial synne / yit sholde men doute hem / for we shul yeue rekenynge of hem / biforne god /

¶ Iangelinge. [649] Now cometh Iangelynge that may nat be withouten synne / as seith Salomon hit is a signe of aperte folye / [650] And therfore a Philosophre seide / whan a man asked him how men sholde please the peple / And he answerde & seide / do many goode workes / & speke fewe Iangelynges /

¶ Iapes. [651] And after this cometh the synne of Iapes that ben the deuels Apes / for thei maken folke to laughe at here iaperye / as folke don at the gaudes of an Ape / suche iapes defendith seint Poule // [652] Loke how that vertuous wordes & holy / conforten hem

that travaile in the *ser*uice of criste / Rigħt so conforten the vileyns wordes & knakkes of iapers hem / that travailen in the *ser*uice of the deuel / [653] these ben the synnes that comen of the tonge / that comen of Ire / And other synnes many mo.

Remedi*um* cont*ra* pecc*atu*m Ire.

[654] THe remedie ayeines Ire / is a v*er*tu that men clepen Mansuetude that is debonairte / & eke another vertu that men clepen Pacience / or ellis sufferaunce /

[655] Debonairte withdrawiħ & refreyneħ the sterynges & the mevynges of man-is corage in his herte / in suche man*ere* that thei ne skippe nougħt out bi anger / ne bi Ire / [656] Suffraunce suffreth swetly alle the anoysaunces / & the wronges / that men don to a man outwarde / [657] seint Ierome seith thus of Debonairte ¶ Ierome that hit doth noon harme to no wigħte / ne seith for noon harme that men him don ne seyne / he ne eschaungeth nat ayeines his reson / [658] This v*er*tu comeħ somtyme of nature / ffor as seith the Philosophre / a man is a quike thinge bi nature / debonaire & tretable bi goodenesse / But whan debonairte is enformed of grace / it is the more worthe /

[659] Pacience that is another remedie aye*n*st Ire / hit is a v*er*tu that suffreħ swetly eu*er*y mannys goodnesse / & is nat worthe for noon harme / that is doñ [1]vnto him / [660] the Philosophre seith that Pacience is that v*er*tu that suffreħ debonairly alle the outrages of adu*er*site and eu*er*y wikked worde / [661] this v*er*tu makeħ a man I-like to god & maketh him his owne dere childe as seiħ criste / This v*er*tu disconfiteth thin enemy / And therfore seith the wise man / If thow wolt venquysshe thin Enemy lerne to suffre / [662] And thow shalt vnderstonde / that a man suffreħ .iiij. manere

of greuaunces in outwarde thinges / ayeines the whiche .iiij. he mote haue .iiij. man*er*e of paciences /

[663] The first greuaunce is of wikked wordes / thilke greuaunce suffred oure lord ih*es*u criste / withouten grucchinge ful paciently / whan the Iewes dispised him & rep*ro*ued him ful offte / [664] suffre thow therfore paciently / ffor the wise man eke seith̄ / If thow strive with a fool / though̄ the fool be wroth̄ or though he laugh̄e algate thow shalt haue no reste // [665] That other grevaunce outwarde is / to haue damage of thi catel / There ayeines suffred criste ful paciently / whan he was dispoyled of al that he hadde in this liff & that nas nought but the clothes / [666] The .iij. greuaunce is to a man to haue harme in his body / that suffred criste ful paciently in al his passion / [667] The ferthe greuaunce is an outragious labour in werkes / wherfore I seie that folke that maken here s*er*uauntes to travaile to grevously or out of tyme / as on halydayes / sothly thei don grete synne / [668] Here ayeines suffred criste ful paciently & taught vs pacience / whan he bare vppon his blessed shildres the croys vppon the whiche he sholde suffre dispitous deth̄ / [669] Here may men lerne to be paciente / ffor certes nough̄t onely cristen men ben pacient / for the loue of ih*es*u criste & for guerdon of the blisse of heuen / & of the blisful liff that is p*er*durable / But c*er*tes the olde paynemes that neu*er*e were cristen commenden & vsen the v*er*tu of pacience /

[670] A Philosophre vppon a tyme that wolde haue beten his disciple for his grete trespace / for whiche he was gretly ameved / & brought a yerde to scoure the childe / [671] And whan the childe sawe the yerde / he seide to his maister / [1]what wol ye don / I wol bete the q*uo*d the maister for thi correcc*i*on / [672] ffor sothe q*uo*d the childe ye ough̄te firste correcte youre silff / that haue lost youre pacience for the gilte of a childe / [673] ffor sothe q*uo*d the maist*er* al weping thow

seist sothe / haue thow the yerde my dere sone & correcte me for myn impacience / [674] Off pacience cometh obedi*en*ce thorugh the whiche a man is obedient to criste / & to alle hem to whiche he oughte to be obediente in criste / [675] And vnderstonde wel that obedience is p*er*fite / whan men doon gladly and hastyly with good herte entirely al that he shulde don / [676] Obedience gene*r*ally is to p*er*forme the doctryne of god / & of his sou*er*aignes to whiche him oughte to be obeissaunt to al man*er*e of rightwisnesse /

De accidia.

[677] Affter the synnes of Envie & Ire / now wol I speke of the synne of accidie / for envie blyndeth the herte of a man / And Ire troubleth a man / And accide maketh him hevie / thoughtful / & wrawe / [678] Envie & Ire maken bitternesse in herte / whiche bitt*er*nesse is moder of accidie / & bynemeth him the loue of al goodnesse / than is accidie the anguysshe of a troubled herte / And seint Austyne seith / ¶ Austyne. It is anoye of goodnesse / & anoye of harme / [679] certis this is a dampnable synne / for it doth wronge to Ih*es*u criste / in-asmeche as hit bynemeth the seruice that men don to criste with al diligence / as seith Salomon / ¶ Salomon. [680] But accide doth no suche diligence / he doth al thing with anoy / & wrawnesse / slaknesse & excusacion / & with ydulnesse & vnlust / ffor whiche the booke seith / Acursed be he that doth the s*er*uice of god necligently / [681] than is accidie Enemy to eu*er*y estate of man / ffor c*er*tis thestate of man is in .iij. maners / [682] The first estate is the estate of Innocencie as was thestate of Adam bifore or he fel in-to synne / in whiche estate he was holden to werche / as in heriyng & honouryng of god / [683] Another estate is the estate of synful men / in whiche estate men ben holden

to laboure / in praiyng to god for amendement of here synnes / & that he wol graunte hem to arise out of here [1]synnes / [684] Another estate is thestate of grace / in whiche estate he is holde to do workes of penaunce / & certis to alle these thinges is accidie enemy & contrarie / for he loueth no besynesse at al / [685] Now certis this foule synne accidie is eke a ful grete enemy to the liflode of the body / for it hath no purviaunce ayeines temporel necessite / for hit is for slouthed / for slougged & distroyed alle goodes temporelles bi rechelesnesse /

[686] The fourthe thing is / that accide is like hem that ben in the peyne of helle / bicause of here slouthe / & of here hevynesse / ffor thei that ben dampned ben so bounde / that thei ne mow nat wel do / ne wel thenke / [687] Off accide cometh first / that a man is anoyed / & encombred to do any goodnesse / & maketh that god hath abhomynacion of suche accide as seith seint Iohn /

¶ Slouthe. [688] Now cometh slouth that wol nat suffre noon hardenesse / ne no penaunce / ffor soth slouth is so tender & so delicate / as seith Salomon that he wol suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce / And therfore he shendith al that he doth [689] ayeines his roten herted synne of accide / And slouth sholde men excersise & vse hem selff to don good workes & manly / & vertuously cacchen corage wel to don / thenkyng that oure lord ihesu criste quiteth euery goode dede / be it neuere so lite / [690] vsage of labour is a grete thing / ffor hit maketh as seith seint Bernarde / the laborer to haue stronge armes / & harde senowes / & slouth maketh a man feble & tendre / [691] Than cometh drede to bigynne any goode workes / ffor certes he that is enclyned to synne him thenketh it is so grete an emprise / for to vndertake to do workes of goodnesse / [692] and casteth in his herte that the

¶ Bernard

circunstaunces of goodnesse ben so grevous & so chargeable for to suffre / that he dar nat vndertake to don workes of goodnesse / as seith seint Gregorie /

[693] Now cometh wanhope / that is dispeire of the mercy of god / that cometh̄ somtyme of to meche outragious sorow / And somtyme of to meche drede / ymagenynge [1] that he hath̄ don so meche synne / that hit wold nat availe him / though̄ he wolde repent him / & for sake synne & do good / [694] thorugh̄ whiche dispeire or drede / he habundith̄ his herte to euery manere synne / as seith̄ seint Austyne / [695] whiche dampnable synne if it contenue vn-to his ende / hit is cleped synnynge in the holy gost / [696] this orrible synne is so perilous / that he that is dispeired ther is no felonye ne no synne that he douteth̄ for to do / as shewed wel bi Iudas / [697] Certes abouen alle synnes / than is this synne most displesaunce to crist / & most aduersarie [698] to god / sothly he that dispeirith̄ him / is like the cowarde Champion recreant / & seith creant withouten nede / Allas allas nedeles is he recreant / & nedeles dispeired / [699] ffor certes the mercy of god is euere redy to the penitente / & is above alle his workes / [700] Allas can nat a man bi-thinke him on the gospel of seint Luke. xv^mo^. where as criste seith / That as wel shal ther be Ioye in heuen vppon a sinful man / that doth penaunce / than vppon nynety & nyne. that [. . . . *no gap in the MS.*] nedith no penaunce / [701] loke ferthermore in the gospel / the Ioye & the feste of the goodman that had lost his sone / whan his sone with̄ repentaunce was retourned to his fader / [702] Can thei nought remembre hem that as seith seint luke. xiij^o^. Capitulo / how that the theff seide that was honged bi-side ihesu cristes side / lord remembre on me wh*an* thow comest vn-to thi kingdome / [703] ffor sothe seide criste / to day thow shalt be with me in Paradise [704] Certes ther is noon so orrible synne of

¶ Wanhope.

¶ luce .xv^mo^.

¶ luce .xiij^o^. c^o^.

man / that it ne may in his liff be distroyed bi penaunce / thorugh vertu of the passion & the dethe of criste / [705] Allas what nedith a man than to be dispeired / sithen that his mercy so redy is / & so large / Aske & haue /

¶ sompnolencia [706] Than cometh sompnolence that is sloggy slombrynge / whiche maketh a man hevy & dul in body / & in soule / & this synne cometh of slouthe / [707] And certes the tyme that [1]bi wey of reson men sholde nought slepe bi the morowe but if ther were cause resonable / [708] ffor sothely on the morowe tide is most couenable a man to seie his prayeres / & for to thenke on god / & for to honoure god / & to yeve almes to the pore that first comen in the name of criste / [709] Lo whath seith Salomon who so wol bi the morowe awake & seke me / he shal fynde

¶ necligence me / [710] Than cometh necligence or rechelesnesse / that recketh of nothinge / And how that ignoraunce is the moder of al thing / that toucheth harme / Certes necligence is the norice / [711] necligence doth no force whan he shal do a thinge / whether he do it wel or badly /

[712] Off remedy of these two synnes / as seith the wise man / That he that dredith god / spareth not to don / that him oughte to don / [713] & he that loueth god / he wol do diligence to please god / bi his workes / and habunden him selff with al his myghte wel for to don /

¶ ydelnesse. [714] Than cometh ydelnesse / that is the yate of al harme / An ydel man is like to a place that hath no walles / there As deuels may entren bi euery side / or shete at him at discouert bi temptacion on euery side / [715] this ydelnes is the Thorroke of alle wikked & vileynes thoughtes / & of alle Ianglis / triflis / & of al ordure / [716] Certes the heuen is yeven to hem that

¶ Dauid wol laboure & nought to ydel folke / Eke Dauid seith / thei ne be nat in the laboure of men / ne thei ne shal nat be whippede with men / that is to seie in purgarie /

[717] Cert*es* than semeth̄ hit that thei shul be turmented / with the deuel in helle / but if thei don penitence /

[718] Than cometh̄ the synne that men clepen tarditas / as whan a man is to latrede or to tariyng / or he wol turne to god / & c*er*tis that is a grete folye / he is like him that fallith in the diche & wol nough̄t arise / [719] as this vice cometh of fals hope that he thenketh that he shal leve longe / bu[t] that hope failith̄ ful offte / ¶ tarditas

[720] Than cometh laches that is he / that whan he bigynneth̄ any goode werke / a-non he wol forlete it & stynte / as don thei that haue any wigh̄t [1]to gou*er*ne / & ne taken of him no more kepe / anoon as thei fynde any contrarie or any anoye / [721] these ben the newe shepperdes that laten here shepe renne weti[n]gly to the wolff that is in the breres / or don no force of here owne gou*er*naunce / [722] Of this cometh̄ pou*er*te / and distruccion bothe of spirituel & of temporel thinges / Than cometh a man*er*e of coldnesse / that fresith at the herte of man / [723] Than cometh vndevocion / thorugh the whiche a man is blente / as seith seint Bernarde and suche langour in soule / that he ne may neither rede ne synge / in holy chirche / ne hire ne thenke of no deuocion / ne travaile with his hondes in no goode workes / that hit nys to him vnsaverie / & al appalled / [724] than wexeth̄ he sore & slowe & slombri & soone wol be wrothe / & soone is he enclyned to hate & to envie [725] Than cometh the synne of wordly sorowe / whiche that is cleped tristicia / that sleth̄ a man as seint Poule / [726] ffor c*er*tis suche sorowe wercheth to the dethe of the soule & of the bodie also / fforther ou*er*e than cometh̄ that a man is anoyed of his owne liff / [727] wherfore suche sorowe shorteth̄ ful offte the liff of men / or that here tyme come bi wey of kynde / ¶ Laches. ¶ coldenesse. ¶ vndevocion. ¶ Bernard. ¶ Sorow. ¶ Poule

Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

[728] Ageyns this orrible synne of accidie / & the branches of the same / ther is a vertu that is cleped ffortitudo / or strengthe / that is an affeccion thorugh whiche / a man dispisith al maner of noyous thinges / [729] this vertu is so myghti & so vigorous / that hit dar withstonde myghtily & wisely kepe him selff from perellis that ben wikked / and wrestle ayeines the assavte of the deuel / [730] ffor hit enhaunseth & enforseth the soule / right as accidie abateth hit / & makith hit feble / for this ffortitudo may endure bi longe suffraunce / the travailes that ben couenable /

¶ ffortitudo.

¶ ffortitudo.

[731] this vertu hath many spices [. . *no gap in MS.*] The first is cleped / Magnanymyte / that is to seie [1] grete corage / ffor certis ther bihoueth grete corage ayeines accidie / lest that hit swolowe the soule / bi the synne of sorowe / or distroye hit bi wanhope / [732] this vertu maketh folke to vndertake harde thinges / & grevous bi here owne wille / wisely & resonably / [733] And forasmeche as the deuel fiteth ayeines man / more bi queyntise & bi slighte / than bi strengthe / therfor a man sholde with-stonde him / bi witt / & bi reson & with discression / [734] Than ben ther the vertues of feith / & hope in god / & in his seintes / to atcheuen & accomplisshe goode werkes / in the whiche he purposeth fermely to contenue / [735] Than cometh surete or sekernesse / & that is / whan a man ne douteth nat to travaile in tyme comyng to performe the grete workes of goodnesse / that he hath bigonne / [736] Than cometh magnificence / that is to seie / whan a man doth & performeth grete werkes / & that is the ende / whi that men sholde do goode werkes / for in the accomplisshing of grete & goode werkes lithe the grete guerdoun / [737] Than is ther Constaunce / that is stablenesse / of corage / & this sholde be in herte / bi stedefast feith / & in

¶ ffidos spes.

¶ Securitas

¶ Magnificencia

¶ Constancia.

the moovthe / & in berynge / in chere / & in dede / [738] Eke ther ben mo special thinges / & remedies / ageyns accidie in diu*er*se werkes / & in consideracion of peynes of helle / & of the ioyes of heuen / & in the truste of the grace of the holy goste / that wol yeve him myght to p*er*forme his goode entente /

De Auaricia.

[739]

After accidie wol I speke of avarice / & of couetise / of the whiche synne / as seith seint Poule / that the rote of alle synnes is couetise / Ad Tymotheum .vj.to [740] ffor sothely whan the herte of a man is confounded in hit selff / & troubled / and that the soule hath loste the comforte of god / than seketh he an ydel solace of wordly thinges /

[741] Avarice aft*er* the discripcion of seint Augustyne / ¶ Austyne. Is a likerousnesse in herte to haue erthely thinges / [742] So*m*me other folke seie / [1]that auarice is / for to purchase many erthely thinges / & nothing yeve to hem that haue nede / [743] And vnderstondith wel that auarice nys nat onely in londe ne in catel / but somtyme in science / and in glorie / & in eu*er*y man*er*e of outragious thinges / is auarice & couetise / [744] And the difference bitwixe auarice & couetise is this / Couetise is for to coueite suche thinges as thow hast nought / And auarice is to withholde & kepe / suche thinges as thow hast withouten rightful nede / [745] sothely this auarice is a synne that is ful dampnable / ffor al holy writt curseth hit / & speketh ayeines that vice / ffor it dothe wrouge to Ih*es*u criste / [746] for it bireueth him the loue that men to him owen / and turneth hit bakwarde ayeines al reson / [747] & maketh that the auericious man / hath more hope in his catel tha*n* in Ih*es*u criste / & doth more obseruaunce in keping of his tresour / than he doth to the s*er*uice of ih*es*u criste [748] And therfore seith

¶ Poule seint Paule / Ad Ephecios / v.to that an auarious man is thral to ydolatrie /

[749] what difference is bitwixe an ydolastre / & an auarous man / But that an ydolastre p*er*auenture ne hath but oon mavmet or two / And the auarous man hath̄ many / ffor c*er*tis eu*er*y floreyne or noble in his cofre is his Mavmet / [750] And certis the synne of Mavmetrie is the first thing / that god defendith̄ in the ten commaund-
¶ Exodi c°. ementes / as berith witnesse in Exodi c° (*blank*) [751] thow shalt haue no fals godis / bifore me / ne thow shalt make to the no grave thinge / thus is than an auarous man that loueth̄ his tresour̄ biforne god / An ydolastre [752] thorugh his synne of avarice / & of couetise / comen these harde lord-shippes / thorugh̄ whiche men ben distroyed / bi tallages Custumes & cariages / more than here duete or reson is / and eke take thei / of here bonde-men am*er*sementes / whiche myghte more resonably be [1]cleped extorcions than m*er*cymentes / [753] of whic[h]e m*er*cimentes & raunsons of bondemen / some lordis Stewardes seyne that hit is rightful / for-asmeche as a Cherle hath no temporel thing / that hit ne is here lordes as thei seie / [754] But c*er*tis thes lordes don wronge / that thei bireve here bonde folke thinges / that thei
¶ Austyne neu*er* gaff hem / Augusti[n]*us* de Ciuitate dei libro nono / [755] sothe is that the condicion of thraldom / & the first
¶ Genes*is* qu*in*to cause of thraldom is for synne / Genes*is* quinto /

[756] thus may ye se that the gilte deservith thraldom / but nat nature / [757] wherfore these lordes ne shulde nat meche glorifie hem in here lord-shippes / sithen that bi naturel condicion thei ben lordis ou*er* thrallis / but for that / that thraldom cam first bi deserte of synne / [758] And ferther ou*er* there as the lawe seith̄ / that temporal goodes of bonde folke / ben the goodes of here lordshippes / ye that is to vnderstonde / the goodes of the Emp*er*our̄ to defenden hem in here right̄ / but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem / [759] And therfor̄

seith Seneca / Thi prudence sholde leve benygnely with thi thrallis / [760] thei that thow clepest thi thrallis / ben godis peple / ffor humble folke ben cristes frendes / thei ben contubernyal with the lorde / ¶ Seneca.

[761] Thenke eke that of suche seede as Cherles springen / of suche seede springen lordes / as wel may the Cherle be saued / as the lorde / [762] The same dethe that taketh the Cherle / the same dethe takith the lorde / wherfore I rede do right so with thi cherle / as thow woldest thi lord dide with the / if thow were in his plighte / [763] Euery sinful man is a cherle to synne / I rede the lorde thow werche in suche wise / that thi cherles rather loue the than drede the / [764] I wot wel ther is degre / aboue degre / as reson is / & skele that if that men don here devoyre there as hit is due // But certes extorcions & dispites of youre vnder[1]lynges is dampnable / ¶ Consilium.

[765] and therfore vnder-stondith wel / that conquerou[r]s or tirauntes maken ful offt thralles of hem that ben borne / of as roial blood / as ben thei that hem conqueren / [766] This name of thraldom was neuere erst couthe / til that Noye seide / that his sone Cayme shulde be thral to his brother for his synne / [767] what seie we than of hem that pelyn & don extorcions to holy chirche / Certes the swerde that men yeven first to a knyght whan he is newe dubbed / signefieth that he sholde defende holy chirche / & nought robbe it / & who so doth is traitour to criste / [768] as seith seint Austyne / thei ben deuels wolvis that strangelyn the shepe of ihesu criste / & don worse than wolves / [769] ffor sothly whan the wolff hath ful his wombe / he stinteth to strangelyn shepe / but sothely the pilours & the distroyours of holy chirche goodes ne don nat so / for thei ne stinte neuer to pilen / [770] Now as I haue seide / sithen so is that sinne was first cause of thraldom / than is it ¶ Cayme cause of thraldom. ¶ Austyne.

thus / that thilke tyme that al the world was in synne / than was al the world*e* in thraldom & subieccion / [771] But c*er*tis sithen the tyme of grace cam / god ordeyned / that some folke shold be more high in estate & degre / than some / and some folke more lowe / And that eu*er*yche sholde be serued in his estate / & in his degre / [772] And therfore in some contrees there they ben thrallis / whan thei haue turned hem to the feith̄ / thei maken here thralles free / out of thraldom / And therfore c*er*tis the lord owith̄ to his man / that the man owith to his lorde / [773] The Pope clepeth him silff s*er*uaunt of the s*er*uauntes of god / But for-asmeche as the estate of holy chirche / ne myghte nat haue be kept / ne the comen p*ro*fite ne myght nat haue be kept ne pees ne reste / in erthe / but if god had ordeyned that some men hadde higher degre / & some men lower / [774] And therfore was sou*er*eynte ordeyned / to kepe and mayntene / & defende here vnderlinges / & here subiectes in reson / as ferforthe as it lith̄ in here powere / and nat to distroye hem / ne confounde / [775] wherfore I seie / that suche lordes as ben like wolves / that devoure*n* the possessions or the catel of pore folke wrongefully withouten m*er*cy or mesure / [776] thei shullen resceiven bi the same mesure / that thei haue mesured to pore folke / the m*er*cy of Ih*es*u criste / but if hit be amended / [777] Now cometh̄ disceite bitu[i]xe march*a*unt & marchaunt / And thow shalt vnderstonde that marchaundise is in many maners / that oon is bodily & that other is gostly / that oon is leful & honest / that othe*r*e is dishoneste & vuleful / [778] Of thilke bodyly marchau*n*dise that is leful & honest is this / that there as god hath ordeyned / that a Regne or a contre is sufficiaunt to him silff / than it is honest & leful / that of the abundaunce of this contre / that men helpe another contre that is more nedye / [779] And therfore ther mote be marchauntes to bringe from that oon contre / to that othe*r*e / here march-

¶ s*er*uus s*er*uo-r*um*

¶ Disceite.

aundise / [780] That other marchaundise is that / that men haunte with fraude / & trecherie / & disceite / with lesinges / & fals othes / is cursed & dampnable / [781] Espirituel marchaundise is p*ro*perly Symonye / that is ententiff desire to bye thinge espirituel / that is thinge that app*er*teyneth to the seintuarie of god / & to the cure of soule / [782] This desire if it so be / that a man do his diligence to p*er*forme hit / al be it though his desire ne take noon effecte / yit is it to him a dedly synne / & if be ordrede he is irregulere / [783] Certis Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus / that wolde haue ¶ Symon Magus bought with the temporal catel / the yifft that god hadde yeuen bi the holy gost / to seint Peter / & to thappostles / [784] And therfore vnderstondith / that both̄ he that sellith̄ & he that bieth̄ thinges espirituels ben cleped symonyals / be hit bi catel be hit bi p*ro*curyng / or bi flesshly praiere / of his frendes / or of his sp*irit*uel frendes / [785] [1] flesshely frendes / in two maners / as bi kynrede / or as bi other frendes / or of sp*irit*uel frendes / Sothely if thei praie for him that is nat able / & worthi it is symonye / iff he take that ben*e*fice / & if he be worthi & able hit nys noon / [786] The other man*er*e is whan a man or a woman praie for folke to avaunce hem / onely for wikked flesshely affeccion / that thei haue vn-to the p*er*sones / & that is in soule Symonye / [787] but c*ertes* in s*er*uices for whiche men yeven thinges esp*irit*uels vn-to here s*er*uauntes / hit mot ben vnderstonde / that the s*er*uice mot be honeste / & elles nat / And eke that hit be withouten barganynge / & that the p*er*sone be able / [788] ffor as seith̄ seint Damasie / Alle the synnes of the ¶ Damasie worlde / at the regarde of this sinne / ben as thinge of nought / ffor it is the grettest sinne that may be / aft*er* the sinne of Lucifer & of Antecriste / [789] ffor bi this sinne god forlesith̄ the chirche & the soule / that he bought̄e with his p*re*cious bloode / bi hem that yeuen chirches to hem that ben nat digne / [790] ffor thei putten in theves that

stelen the soule of Ih*es*u criste / & distroyen his patrymoigne / [791] By suche vndigne prestes / & curat*es* haue men the lasse reu*er*ence of the sacramentes of holy chirche / And suche yeuers of chirches putten out the childerne of criste / & putten in-to the chirche the deuels owne sones / [792] thei sellen the soules / the lombes thei kepen to the wolff that strangelith̄ hem / and therfore shul thei neu*er* haue p*ar*te of the pasture of the lombes / that is in the blisse of heuen / [793] Now cometh̄ hasardrie / with̄ his appurtenaunce / as tables / Ravfles / of whiche comen disceite / & flas othes / Chidinges / & al ravynges / blasphemynge / & reuyynge of god / & hate of his neigh̄bours / wastynge of goodes / misspendynge of tyme / & somtyme manslaugh̄ter / [794] Certis hasardours ne mowe nough̄t be withouten grete synne / whiles thei haunten that craffte / [795] Off Avarice cometh̄ eke lesinges / thefft / fals witnesse [1] ffals othes / and ye shul vnderstonde / that these ben grete synnes / & expresse ayeines the co*m*maundeme*n*tes of god as I haue seide / [796] ffals witnesse is in worde & in dede eke / In worde / as for to bireve thi neighbo*ur*is good name / bi thi fals wittnesse / or bireve him his catel / or his heritage bi thi fals wittnessinge / whan thow for Ire / or for mede / or for envie / berest fals witnesse / or accusest him / or excusest him bi thi fals wittnesse / or ellis excusest thi selff falsly // [797] War yow questemongeres & notories / Certis for fals wittnessinge was Susanna in grete sorowe & peyne & many another mo / [798] The sinne of thefft is eke expresse ayeines godis heeste / & that in two man*er*s / Corporel & sp*irit*uel / [799] [Corporel] as for to take thi neigh̄boris catel / ayeines his wil / be hit bi force / or bi slighte / be it bi mette or bi mesure / [800] bi stelinge eke of fals enditementes vppon him / And in borowynge of thi neigh̄boris catel / in that entente neu*er*e to pay / & semblable thinges / [801] Esp*irit*uel thefft is sacrilege / that is to seie in hurt-

¶ hasardrie.

¶ war yow questemongeres.

ynge of holy thinges / or of thinges sacrede to criste / in two man*er*s / bi reson / of the holy place / as chirches or chirchehawes / [802] ffor eu*er*y violente sinne that men don in suche places may be cleped sacrilege / or eu*er*y violence in semblable place / Also thei that withdrawen falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche / [803] And playnly & gen*er*ally is sacrilege to yeve holy thinge / fro holy place / and vn holy thinge out of holy place / Or holy thinge out of vn-holy place /

Remedium con*tra* Auariciam.

[804]
NOw shul ye vnderstonde / that the relevynge of Auarice is mesericorde / & pite largely taken / And men mygħt axe whi / that misericorde & pite / is the releuynge of Auarice / [805] Certes the auarouse man / shewith no misericorde ne pite / to the nedeful man / ffor he deliteth̄ him in the kepinge of his tresoure / & not in the restoringe ne relevinge of his euen cristen / & therfore speke I first of misericorde [806] [1]Than is misericorde as seith̄ the Philosophre a vertu bi whiche the corage of a man is stered / bi the mysese of him that is mysesed / [807] vppon the whiche misericorde folwith̄ pite / in p*er*formynge of charitable workes / of misericorde / [808] And certes this mevith̄ man to misericorde of Ih*es*u criste / that yaff him silff for oure gult / & suffred dethe / for misericorde / & foreyaff vs oure original sinnes / [809] & therbi relesed vs fro the peyne of helle / & amennshed the peyne of purgatorie bi penaunce / And yevith̄ grace wel to do / And at the laste the ioye of heuen / [810] the spices of misericorde ben as for to leue / & for to yeve / & eke for to foryeve / & relese & haue pite / in herte / & to haue compassion of the mischeff of thi

euencristen / & eke chastice there as nede is / [811] Another man*ere* remedie ayeins auarice is resonable largesse / but sothely here bihovith the consideracion of the grace of Ih*es*u criste / & of his temporel goodes / & eke of the goodes p*er*durable that criste yaff vs / [812] & eke to haue remembraunce of the dethe that he shal resceive he note whanne / & eke that he shal forgon al that he hath / saue only that / he hath dispendid in goode workes /

[813] But for-asmeche as so*m*me folke ben vnmesurable / men oughten eschue foole largesse that men clepen waste / [814] Certis he that is foole large ne yevith nought his catel / but he leseth his catel / Cert*es* what thinge that he yevith for vayngloric / as to mynstralles / & to folke for to bere his renoun in the worlde he hath don synne & noon almes / [815] Certis he leseth foule his goode / that ne seketh nothinge with his goode but synne / [816] he is like an hors that seketh rather to drynke droupy water or troubly / than for to drinke water of the clere welle / [817] And for-asmeche as thei yeuen there as they shulde nat yeuen / to hem apperteyneth that malison that crist shal yeue at the day of dome to he*m* that shulle be dampnede

De gula.

[818]
Affter auarice cometh glotenye / whiche is expresse eke ayeines the co*m*maundementes of [1]god / glotenye is vnmesurable appetite to ete / or to drinke / or ellis to don I-nough*e* / to the vnmesurable[2] & discorde covetise to ete & to drinke / [819] This sinne corru*m*ppeth al this worlde / as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam & of Eue / Lo eke what seith seint Paule / of gloteneye / [820] Many folke of whiche

[2 appetite *erased*]

¶ Paule

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I haue oft seide to yow / & now I seie it wepinge / to hem that ben enemyes of the croyce of criste / of whiche the ende is dethe / and of whiche here wombe is here god / & here glorie in confusion of hem that se devouren erthely thinges / [821] he that is vsante to this synne of glotenye / he ne may no synne with-stande / he moste be in the se*r*uage of alle synnes or vicis / for it is the deuels horde there he hideth him inne & resteth̄ / [822] this synne hath̄ many spices / The first is dronkenesse / that is the sepulture of manis reson / & therfore whan a man is dronke he hath loste his reson / & this is dedly synne / [823] but certis whan a man is nought wonte to stronge dri*n*ke / ne p*er*auenture ne knowith̄ nat the strengthe of the drinke / or hath̄ feblenesse in his hede / or he hath̄ travailled thorugh whiche he drynketh the more / al be he so sodenly caughte with drynke / it is no dedly synne but venial / [824] The seconde spice of gloteneye is / whan the spirite of man waxeth al trouble for dronkenesse / & birevith̄ him the discresion of his witt / [825] The thride spice of glotenye is whan a man devoureth his meete / & hath no rightful man*er*e of etynge / [826] The ferthe is whan thorugh the grete abundaunce of his meete / the humores of his body ben distemperede / [827] The .v. is foryetefulnesse / bi to mechel drynkyng*e* / for whiche somtyme a man for-yetith̄ bi the morowe / what he dide at eve or on the night biforn*e* /

[828] In other manere ben discrived the spices of glotenye / affter seynt Gregorie / The first is for to ete bi fore tyme / The .ij.^{de} is whan a man geteth him to delicate meete / [829] The .iij.^{de} is whan a man taketh to mechel ou*er*e mesure / The .iiij. [1]is the curiouste / with̄ grete entente to make & app*ar*aille his meete / The .v. is to ete to gredily / [830] These ben the .v. fyngeris of the Deuels honde / bi the whiche he drawith̄ folke to synne / ¶ Gregorie.

Remedium contra gulam.

[831]

¶ Galienus

Ageynes glotenye is remedie / the abstinence of his body / as seith Galienus / but that holde I nat meritorie / if he do hit onely for helthe of the bodie / seint Austyne wolde that abstynence were don for vertu / & with pacience / [832] Abstinence he seith is litil worthe / but if a man haue goode wille therto / And but if he be enforced bi pacience and bi charite / & that men do it for godis sake / & in hope to haue the blisse of heuen /

[833] The felowes of abstinence ben Attemperaunce / that holdith the meene in al thinges Eke shame that eschewith al dishoneste / Suffisaunce that seketh no riche metes / ne drinkes / ne doth no fors of noon outrageous apparaillynge of meete / [834] Mesure also that restreyneth bi reson the dislave appetite of etinge / Sobernesse also that restreyneth the outrageousnesse of drinke / [835] Sparynge also that restreyneth the delicate ease to sitte longe at his meete / & sofftly / wherfore somme men stonden of here owne wil / to eten here meete at the lasse leyser /

De luxuria.

[836]

Affter glotenye / than cometh lecherie / ffor these two sinnes ben so nygh cosyns / that often tyme / thei wil nat departen / [837] god woot this sinne is ful displesaunt to god / for he seide him selff / do no lecherie / And there he putte grete peynes ayeines this sinne in the olde lawe / [838] yff a woman thral were taken in this sinne // she sholde be beten with stanes to the dethe / And if she were a gentilwoman she sholde be sleyne with stones / And if she were a busshopes doughter / she sholde be brente / bi godis commaundement / [839] fforther-ouere / for the synne of lecherie god dreynte al the worlde at

dilivio / And aft*er* that he brente .v. Citees / with thonder lighte / and [1]sanke hem in-to helle /

[840] Now lete vs speke than / of thilke foule stinkyng synne of lecherie / that men clepen advoutrie / of wedded folke / that is to seie if that oon of hem be wedded or ellis bothe / [841] seint Iohn seith that advoutrers shulle ben in helle / in a stynkynge brennynge fire of brymston / for here lecherie / In bremston for the stinkynge of there ordure / [842] Certes the brekynge of this sacrament is an horrible thinge / hit was made of god him selff in p*ar*adise / & confermed bi Ih*es*u criste / as seith seint Mathew in the gospell / A man shal lete fader & moder / & take him to his wiff / & thei shul be two in oo flesshe / [843] this sacrament bitokeneth the knyttynge to geder of criste / and of holy chirche / [844] And nat onely that god forbade advoutrie in dede / but eke he commaunded that thow shuldist nat coveite thi neighbors wiff / [845] in this heeste seith seint Austyne is forboden al man*er*e of couetise to do lecherie / Lo what seith seint Mathew quinto c*apitul*o / in the gospell / That who so seeth a woman to couetise of his luste / he hath don lecherie with hir / in his herte / [846] here may ye sen / that nat onely the dede of this synne / is forboden / but eke the desire to don that synne / [847] This cursed synne annoyeth greuously hem that hit haunteth / & first to here soules / ffor he obligeth hit to synne & to the peyne of deth / that is p*er*durable / [848] vn-to the body annoyeth it greuously also / for hit drieth him / & wasteth him / & shendeth him / & of his blode he maketh sacrifice to the fende of helle / hit wasteth eke his catel / & his substaunce / [849] And c*er*tis if it be a foule thinge / a man to wasten his catel on a woman / yit is it a fouler thinge / whan that for suche ordure / wemmen dispenden vppon men here catel & here substaunce / [850] this sinne as seith the p*ro*phete birevith man & woman her*e* gode fame / & al here honour / And it is ful plesaunt to the deuel / for therby

¶ seint Iohan.

¶ Mathewe.

¶ Mathewe.

wynneth he the most p*ar*tie of [1]this worlde / [851] And right as a Marchaunt deliteth hi*m* moste in chaffare that he hath most auantage of / Right so deliteth the fende in this ordure /

[852] this is that other honde of the Deuel / with .v. fyngeres to that kacchetħ the peple to his vilonye / [853] The first fynger is the fool lokyng of the fool man / & of the fool woman / that sletħ / Right as the Basilicok sletħ folke bi the venym of his sighť / for the couetise of the eyghen folwitħ the couetise of the herte / [854] The .ij^de^. fynger is the vileynes touchinge in wikked man*ere* / and therfore seith Salomon / that who so toucheth & handelitħ a woman / he farith I-like him that handelith the Scorpion that stingetħ & sodenly sletħ / thorugh his envenymynge / And who so toucheth warme picche / hit fouleth his fyngers / [855] The .iij. fynger is foule wordes that farith like fire that anoon brenneth the herte / [856] The iiij. fynger is the kissinge / & trewely he were a grete foole that wolde kisse the mouthe of a brennynge Oven / or of a forneys / [857] & more fooles ben thei that kissen in vilanye / for that mouth is the mouthe of helle / & namely these olde dotardes houlours / yit wol thei kisse / though thei may nat do & smater hem / [858] Certis thei ben I-like houndes / ffor an hounde whan he cometh bi the rosiere / or bi other beautees / though he may nought pisse / yit wol he lifft vp his legge / & make a contenau*n*ce to pisse / [859] And for that many men wene that thei may nat synne / for no licorousnesse that he dothe with his wiff / Certis that oppinion is fals / god wote a man may sle him selff with his owne knyff / & maken him dronken witħ his owne tonne / [860] Cert*es* be it wiff / be it childe / or any other erthely thinge / that he loueth bifore god / hit is his mavmet / & he is an ydolastre / [861] A man sholde loue his wiff bi discresion paciently & attemporally / & than is she [2]as it

¶ Salomon.

were his suster / [862] The .v. fynger of the deuels honde is the stingkyng dede of lecherie / [863] Cert*es* the .v. fyngers of glotenye the fende putteth̄ in the wombe of a man / And with the .v. fyngers of lecherie he gripeth him bi the reynes for to throwe him in to the furneys of helle / [864] there as thei shul haue the fire & the wormes that eu*er*e shal laste / & wepinge / & wailynge / sharpe hunger / & thruste / griselynesse of deuels / that shullen al to treden hem withouten respite / & withouten ende / [865] Off lecherie as I seide sourden diu*er*se spices / as fornicacion that is bitwix man & woman / that ben nat maried / & this is dedly sinne & ayeines nature / [866] Al that is enemy & distruccion to nature / is ayeines nature / [867] P*er*fay the reson of a man tellith̄ him wel that it is dedly synne / for-asmeche as god forbade lecherie / And seynt Paule seith̄ / yeueth him the regne that is due to no wight ¶ Paule. but to hem that don dedly synne / [868] Another synne of lecherie is / to bireven a maiden of hir maidenhede / ffor c*er*tis he that so dothe / he taketh̄ a maiden out of the high̄est degre that is in this p*re*sent liff / [869] & birevith hir thilke p*re*cious fruyte / that the booke clepeth̄ the hundrede fruyte / I can nat seie it / in noon other wise in englissh̄ / but in latyn hit high̄t / Centes[i]mus fructus / ¶ Centes[i]mus fructus. [870] Certes he that so dothe / is cause of many damages & vilonyes mo than any man can reken / Righ̄t as he somtyme is cause of al the damages that bestes don in the felde / that breken the hegges or the clausure / thorugh whiche he distroyeth that may nat be restorede / [871] ffor c*er*tis no more may maidenhede be restored / than an arme that is smeten from the body / may retorne ayeine to wexe / [872] she may haue m*er*cy this woote I wel / if she do penaunce / but neu*er*e shal hit be / that she nas corrupte / [873] And al be it so that I haue spoken somwhat of advoutrie / [1] it is goode to shewen mo p*er*illes that longen to aduoutrie / ffor to eschewe the foule

synne of [874] aduoutrie / in latyn it is for to seie / approching of other menis wivis / thorugh whiche tho that whilom were first oo flesshe / abunden here bodies to other persones / [875] Off this synne / as seith the wise man / folowen many harmes / ffirst brekyng of feith / & certis in the feith is the keye of cristendom / [876] & whan that feith is broke & lorne / certis cristendom stondith in vayne & withouten fruyte / [877] this sinne is eke a theffte / for theffte generally is / to reve a wighte his thinge ayeines his wille / [878] Certes this is the fouleste thefft that may be / whan a woman stelith hir body from hir housbond / & yivith hit to hir holour to defoule hir / & stelith hir soule from criste / & yivith hit to the deuel / [879] this is a fouler thefft than forto breke a chirche & stele the chaleys / ffor these aduoutres breken the temple of god spiritually / & stelen the vessel of grace / that is the body & the soule / ffor whiche criste
¶ Poule. shal distroien hem as seith seint Poule / [880] sothely of this thefft dovted gretely Ioseph / whan that his lordis wiff praide him of vilonye / whan he seide lo my ladi how my lorde hath taken to me vnder my warde al that he hath in this worlde / ne nothing of his thinges is out of my power / but onely ye that ben his wiff / [881] and how sholde I than do this wikkednes / & synne so orrible ayeines god / & ayeines my lorde / god hit forbede / Allas al to litel is suche trouth now I-founde / [882] The thridde harme is the filthe thorugh whiche thei breken the commaundement of god / & defoulen the auctor of here matrymoigne that is criste / [883] ffor certis in-so-meche that the sacrament of mariage is so noble / & so digne / so meche hit is the gretter synne to breke hit / ffor god made mariage in Paradise in the state of Innocence / to multiplie [1]mankynde to the seruice of god / [884] & therfore is the brekyng therof the more greuous / of whiche breking cometh fals heires ofte tyme / that wrongefully occupien other menis heritage / & therfore wol criste put

hem out of the regne of heuen / that is heritage to goode folke / [885] Of this brekyng cometh oftyn tyme / that folke vnwar wedde*n* or synnen / with here owne kynrede / & namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels / of these foole we*m*men that mowe be likened to a comune gouge / where as men purgen there ordure / [886] what seie we eke of poyto*ur*s that leven bi the horrible synne of putrie & constreinen wo*m*men to yelde hem a ce*r*teyne rente of here bodily putrie / y somtyme of his owne wiff / or his childe / as don these baudes / Cert*es* these ben cursed synnes / [887] Vnderstondith eke that advoutrie is sette gladly in the ten co*m*maundementes / bituexe theffte & manslaughter / ffor it is the grettest theffte that may be / ffor it is the theffte of body & of soule / [888] & hit is like homycide / for it kerveth a-two & breketh a-two hem that first were made Oo flesshe / & therefore bi the olde lawe of god / thei sholde be sleyne / [889] But natheles bi the lawe of ih*es*u criste that is the lawe of pite / whan he seide to the womman that was founden in advoutrie / & sholde haue ben sleyne with stones / aft*er* the wil of the Iewes / as was there lawe / Go q*uo*d ih*es*u criste & haue no more wille to synne / or willen to do no more no synne / [890] sothely the vengeaunce of advoutrie is awarded to the peyne of helle / but if it be distorbled bi penaunce / [891] yit ben ther mo spicis of this cursed synne / as whan that oon of hem is religious / or ellis both / or of folke that ben entred in-to order / as subdiacone / & deken / or preste / or hospitelers / & eu*er* the higher that he is in order / the gretter is the synne / [892] The thinges that gretly agregen here synne / is the brekyng of here avowe / of chastite / that thei made whan thei resceivede order / [893] And forther ou*er*e soth it is / that holy order is tresour [1]cheff of god / & his especial signe & marke of chastite / to shewe that thei ben Ioyned to chastite / whiche that is the most p*re*cious liff that is / [894] And eke these ordred folke ben specially entitled to god / & of the

special meyne of god / ffor whiche whan thei don dedly synne / thei ben the special traytours of god / & of his peple / ffor thei leven of the peple / to praie for the peple / And while they ben suche traitours / here praiers availen nat to the peple / [895] ¶ Prestes ben as Aungels / as bi the dignite of here misterie / but for sothe seint Poule seith / that Sathanas transformeth him in an Aungel of light / [896] sothely the preste that haunteth dedly synne / he may be likened to the Angel of derkenesse / transformed / in the Angel of light / he semeth an Angel of light / & but for sothe he is an Angel of derkenesse / [897] suche p*re*stes ben the sones of Belye as shewith in the boke of kynges / that thei weren the sones of Belial / that is the deuel / [898] Belyal is to seyne withouten Iugge And so faren thei / hem thenketh thei ben fre / & han no Iugge / no more than hath a fre Boole / that taketh whiche kow that him liketh in the towne / [899] Right so faren thei bi wo*m*men / ffor right as a fre Boole is I-nough for al a toune / Right so is a wikked p*re*ste corrupt / I-nough for al a parissh / or for al a contre / [900] these prestes as seith the booke / ne conne nat the mynysterie of p*re*sthode to the pepel / ne god knowith hem nought / thei holde hem nat a-paide as seith the booke / of soden flessh that was to hem offred / but thei toke bi force the flessh that is rawe / [901] Cert*es* right so these olde shrewis / ne holde hem nat a-paide of rosted flessh / & soden flessh / with the whiche the peple feden hem with grete reu*er*ence / but thei wol haue rawe flessh / as men-is wivis & here doughtre*n* / [902] And c*er*tis these women that consenten to here harlotries / don grete wronges to criste / & to holy chirche / And to alle halowes / & to alle soules / ffor they [1]bireven him alle these that sholden wourship*e* criste / & holy chirche / & pray for alle cristen soules / [903] And therefore haue suche prestes & here lemmans eke that consenten to here lecherie / the malison of al cristen courte / til thei come to amendement /

¶ Paulus.

¶ prestes wol haue rawe flesshe.

[904] The thride spice of advoutrie / is bitwene a man and his wiff / & that is whan thei take no rewarde in here assemblynge / but onely to here flesshly delite / as seith seint Ierome / [905] and rekken of nothinge but ¶ Ierome. that thei ben assembled / bi-cause that thei ben I-mariede al is good I-nough / as thenkith to hem / [906] but in suche folke the deuel hath power / as seide the Aungel Raphael to Tobye / ffor in al here assemblynge thei putten oute ihesu criste of here herte / & yeven hem selff to al ordoure / [907] The .iiij. spice of advoutrie is the assemblyng of hem that ben of here kynrede / or of them that ben of oon affinite / or ellis with hem with whiche hir fader or here kynrede hath deled in the synne of lecherie / this synne maketh hem I-like to houndes / that taken no kepe to kynrede / [908] And certis perentela is in two maners / outher gostly outher flesshly / gostly is to delen with here gossebes / [909] ffor right so as he that engendreth the childe is the flesshly fader / right so is his gossebe his spirituel fader / ffor whiche a woman may no lasse synne assemble with hir gosseb / than with hir owne flesshely brother / [910] The .v. spice is that abhomynable synne of whiche that no man vnnethes oughte to speke ne write / natheles hit is openly rehersed in holy writte / [911] this cursednes don men & women in diuers entente / & in diuers manere / but though that holy writte speke of orrible synne / certis holy writte may nat be defouled / no more than the sonne that shyneth on the mexen / [912] Another synne perteyneth vn-to lecherie / that cometh in sleping / & this synne cometh offte to hem that [1]ben maydens / & eke to hem that ben corrupte / & this synne men clepen pollucion / that cometh in .iiij. maners / [913] somtyme of a languysshinge of body for the humours ben to ranke / & to habundaunte in the bodie of a man / Somtyme for the infirmite & for the feblenes of the vertu retentiff / as phisike maketh mension / Somtyme for surfete of mete & drinke / [914] And somtyme of

violent thoughtes that ben enclosed in man-is mynde whan he gooth to slepe / whiche may nat be withouten synne / ffor the whiche men muste kepe hem wisely / or ellis thei may synne greuously

¶ The remedie ayeines lecherie

[915] NOw cometh the remedie ayeinest lecherie / & that is gen*er*ally chastite / & continence / that restreyneth al the disordeine mevyng*e* that cometh of flesshly talentes / [916] & eu*er* the gretter merite shal we haue / that moste restreyneth the wikked enchaufynges / or ordour of this synne / And this is in two man*er*s / that is to seie chastite of mariage / & chastite of widewhode / [917] Now shalt thow vnderstonde that matrymonye is lefful assemblyng*e* of man & of woman / that receiven bi v*er*tu of sacrament / the bonde thorugh whiche thei may nat be dep*ar*ted in al there liff / that is to seyn whiles that thei leven bothe / [918] This is as seith the booke a ful gret sacrament / god made hit as I haue seide in P*ar*adise / & wolde him selff be borne in mariage / [919] And for to halowen mariage / he was at a wedding / where*as* he torned wat*er* vn-to wyne / whiche was the firste miracle that he wroughte here in erthe / bifore his disciples / [920] Trewe effecte of mariage clensith fornicacion / & replesshith holy chirche of good lynage / for that is the ende of mariage / & hit changith dedly synne / in-to venial synne / bitwex hem that ben wedded / & makith the hertes al oon / of hem / [. . . *no gap in the MS.*] as wel as the bodies / [921] this is verry mariage that was establis[1]shed bi god or that synne bigan / whan naturel lawe / was in his right poynte in P*ar*adise / And hit was ordeyned that oo man / sholde haue but oo woman / And oo woman sholde haue but oo man / as seith seint Austyne bi many resons /

¶ Austyne.

[922] ffirst for that mariage is figured bitw[i]x god &

holy chirche / And that other is / for that a man is the hede of the woman / algate bi ordinaunce hit sholde be so / [923] ffor if a woman had mo men than oon / than sholde she haue mo hedes than oon / & that were an orrible thing bifore god / And eke oo woman myghte nat please to many folke attones / And also there shulde neuere be pees ne reste / amonges hem / ffor eueryche wolde axe his owne thinge / [924] And ferther ouer no man shulde knowe his owne engendrure / ne who sholde haue his heritage / And the woman sholde be the lesse biloued fro the tyme that she were comune to many men /

[925] Now cometh how that a man sholde bere him with his wiff / And namely in two thinges / that is to seie / in suffraunce & in reuerence / & that shewed criste whan he made first woman / [926] ffor he made hir nought of the hede of Adam / ffor she sholde nat cleyme to grete lordshippe / [927] ffor there as the woman hath the maistrie / she makith to meche disaray / there nedeth noon ensamples of this / thexperience day bi day oughte I-nough suffice / [928] Also certis god ne made nat woman of the foote of Adam / ffor she sholde nat be holden to lowe / ffor she can nat paciently suffre / but god made woman of the ribbe of Adam / ffor woman sholde be felowe vn-to man / [929] A man sholde bere him to his wiff / In feith / In trouthe / & in love / as seith seint Poule / that a man sholde love his wiff / As criste loueth holy chirche / that loued hit so wel that he deyede for hit / so sholde a man for his wiff If hit were nede / ¶ Poule

[930] Now how that a woman sholde be subiecte to hir housbonde / that tellith seint Peter / ffirst in obedience / [931] and eke as seith the Decre / A woman as longe [1]as she is a wiff / she hath noon auctorite to swere / ne to bere wittnesse / withoute leve of here housbondes / that is here lorde / algate he sholde be so bi reson / [932] She sholde eke serve him in al ¶ Petrus.

honeste / & ben attempre of hir array I woot wel that thei shulde sette al here entente to please here housbondes / but nat bi queyntise of here array / [933] seint Ierome seith that wives that ben apparelled in silke & in precious purpul / ne mowen nat clothen hem in ihesu criste / Loke what seith seint Iohn eke in this matere [934] seint Gregorie seith eke that no wight seketh precious array but onely for vaynglorie to ben honoured the more biforn the peple / [935] hit is a grete folie a woman to haue feire array outwarde / & hir silff to be foule inwarde / [936] A wiff sholde eke be mesurable in lokynge / & eke in berynge / & in laughynge / & discrete in al hir wordes / & in hir dedes / [937] And aboven al wordly thinge she sholde loue hir housbonde with al hir herte / & to him be trewe of hir bodie / [938] so sholde an housbonde eke be trewe of his bodie to his wiff / ffor soth al the bodie of the wiff is the housbondes / so sholde hir herte be / or ellis ther is bitwex hem two / as in that no perfite mariage / [939] Than shal a man vnderstonde / that for thre thinges a man & his wiff mowe flesshly assemble The first is / in entente to engendrure of children to the seruice of god / for certis that is the cause fynal of matrymony / [940] A-nother cause is / to yelden euerych of hem to other the dette of here bodies / for neither of hem hath powere of his owne bodie / The thirde cause is to eschewe lecherie / & vilonye / The ferthe for-soth is dedly synne / [941] As to the first it is meritorie / the seconde also / ffor as seith the Decre / that she hath the merite of chastite / that yeldeth to hir housbonde the dette of hir bodie / ye though hit be ayeinst hir likyng & the lust of hir herte / [942] The thridde manere is venial synne / & trewly scarsly may any of these ben withoute venial synne / for the corupcion & for the delite / [943] The ferthe manere is / for to vnderstonde [1]as is the assemble onely for amorous loue / & for noon of the forseide causes / but

¶ Ierome.
¶ Iohan.
¶ Gregorie.

for to accomplissh thilke brennyng delite / & thei recke neu*er*e how offte / sothly hit is a dedly synne / And yit with sorowe some folke wol peyne hem to do more than here appetite suffisith /

[944] The secounde man*er*e of chastite is to be a clene wedowe & to eschewe thenbrasing of man / & desire thenbrasing of ih*es*u criste / [945] these ben tho that haue ben wives & haue forgon there housbondes / And eke women that haue don lecherie / & ben releued bi penaunce / [946] And c*er*t*es* if that a wiff couthe kepe hir chaste in al / bi licence of hir housbonde / so that she neu*er*e yaff noon occacion that he agilt hit were to hir a grete merite / [947] these man*er*e of women that observen chastite moste be clene in herte / as wel as in bodie / & in thought / & mesurable in clothing*e* / and in contenaunce / abstynente in etynge / & in drinking*e* / in spekyng*e* / & in dede / & than is she the vessel or the boiste / of the blissed Magdaleyne / that fulfilled holy chirche ful of good odour*e* / [948] The thredde man*er*e of chastite / is virginite / & hit bihovith that she be holy in herte / & clene in bodie / than is she spouse to ih*es*u criste / & she is the liff of aungels / [949] she is the preising of this world / & she is as these martirs in Regalite / she hath in hir that no tonge may telle / [950] virginite bare oure lorde / ih*es*u criste / & virginite he was him selff /

[951] A-nother remedie ayeines lecherie / is specially to withdrawe suche thinges / as yeven occasion to that vilonye / as is ease / & etynge / & drinkinge / ffor c*er*tis whan the pot boylith strongelie / the beste remedie is / for to with-drawe the the (*sic*) fire / [952] sleping longe in grete quiete is eke a grete norice to lecherie / ¶ remedium con*tra* luxuriam. ¶ no*ta* bene

[953] Another remedie a-yeines lecherie is that a man or a woman eschue the companye of he*m* bi whiche he douteth to be tempted / ffor al be it so that the dede be with-stonde / yit is ther grete temptacion /

[954] sothely a white wal / al-thoughh it brenne nat fully / bi stikynge of a candel / yit is the wal blak of the lighte [955] [1]ful offte tyme / I rede that no man truste in his owne perfeccion / but he be stronger than Sampson / or holiere than Dauid / & wisere than Salomon /

¶ Sampson.
¶ Dauid.
¶ Salomon.

[956] Now that I haue declared yow as I can the .vij. dedly synnes / & some of here braunches / & here remedies / sothely if I couthe I wolde telle yow the ten comaundementes [957] but so highh a doctryne I lete to divines / but natheles I hope to god thei ben touched in this litil tretise euerych of hem alle /

De secunda parte penitencie.

[958] NOw for-asmeche as the seconde partie of penaunce stonte in confession of mouthe / as I bigan in the chapitre / I seie seint Austyne seithh / [959] synne is euery worde / & euery dede / & al that men coveiten ayeines the lawe of ihesu criste / And this is for to synne in herte / in mouthe / & in dede / bi the .v. wittes / that ben / sighte / hirynge / smellynge / tastynge or sauerynge / & felynge / [960] Now is hit good to vnderstonde the circumstances that aggregen mechel euery synne / [961] thow shalt considre what thow arte that doist the synne / whether thow be male or female / y[o]nge or olde / gentil or thral / fre or seruaunte / hoole or sike / wedded or sengle / ordred or vnordred / wise or foole / clerke or seculere / [962] if she be of thi kynrede bodily or gostly or non / if any of thi kynrede haue synned with hir or non / & many mo thinges /

¶ prima circumstancia peccati

¶ Secunda

[963] That other circunstaunce is this / whether hit be don in fornicacion / or in aduoutrie or non / or in ceste or non / maiden or non / in manere of homicide or non / orrible grete synne or smale / & how longe thow hast contenued in synne / [964] The thride circunstaunce is the place where as thow hast don synne / whether in other

¶ tercia

men-is hous or in thin owne / in felde or in chirche or in chirchehawe / in chirche dedicate or non / [965] ffor if the chirche be halowed / & a man or a woman spilt his kynde bi wey of synne with-inne that place / or bi wikked temptacion the chirche were enterdited / til it were reconsiled bi the [1]busshop*pe* / [966] And if he were a preste that dide suche a vilonye / the t*er*me of al his liff he shulde neu*er*e singe masse / & if he dide / he shulde do dedly synne at eu*er*y tyme that he songe masse / ¶ war ye p*r*estes.

[967] The ferthe circunstaunce is / bi suche mediat- ¶ quarta.
ours / as be messangers as for enticement / or for consentement / to bere company with felowship*pe* / ffor many a wrecche for to bere co*m*panye / wil go to the deuel of helle / [968] ffor they that eggen / or consenten to the synne / ben p*ar*tyners of the sinne / & of the dampnacion of the synne /

[969] The .v. . . . . is how many tymes ¶ quinta.
he hath synned / if it be in his mynde / & how offte that he hath̄ falle / [970] ffor he that oft fallith̄ in synne / dispisith̄ the m*er*cy of god / & encresith̄ his synne / & is vnkynde to god / & he wexeth̄ the more feble to withstonde synne / & synneth̄ the more lightliere / [971] & the latter arisith̄ / & is the more eschue to shriven him / & namely to him that hath̄ be his confessour / [972] ffor whiche that folke whan that they falle ayeine in here olde folies / outher thei forleten here olde confessours / al vtterly / or ellis thei dep*ar*ten here shrifft / in diu*er*s places / but sothely such̄ dep*ar*ted shrifft deservith no m*er*cy of god of his synnes / [973] The .vj. circun- ¶ Sexta.
staunce is this / whi that a man synneth̄ as bi temptacion / & if him selff p*ro*cure that temptacion / or bi the exityng of other folke / or if he synne with̄ a woman bi force / or bi hir owne assente / [974] or if the woman mavgre hir hede hath̄ be enforsed or noon / this shal she telle / ffor couetise or for pou*er*te / & if hit was hir p*ro*curynge or non / & suche man*er*e

¶ Septima. harneys / [975] The .vij. circunstaunce is / in what man*er*e he hath doñ his synne / & how that she hath suffred folke to doñ to hir / [976] & the same shal the man telle pleynly / al circunstaunces / & whether he hath synned with comune bordel women or non / [977] or doñ his synne in holy tymes or non / In fastynge tymes or non / or biforn his shriffte or after his latter shriffte / [978] & hath p*er*auenture / broken [1]ther-fore his penaunce enioyned / bi whos helpe / & whos consaille / bi sorcerie & craffte / al moot be tolde / [979] al these thinges aft*er* that thei ben grete & smale engregen the conscience of man / And eke the preste that is thi Iugge may the bett*er* ben avised in his iugement / & in yevinge of thi penaunce / & that is aft*er* thi contricion / [980] ffor vnderstondeth wel / that aft*er* the tyme that a man hathe defouled his baptyme bi synne / if he wil come to saluacion / ther is noon other wey but bi penaunce & shrifft / & bi satisfaccion / [981] And namely bi tho two / if ther be a confessour to whiche he may shrive him / & the thridde if he may haue liff to p*er*forme hit /

[982] than shal a man loke & considre / if he wol make a trewe & p*ro*fitable confession / ther moste be .iiij. condiciones therinne / [983] ffirst hit most be in
¶ Ezechiel sorowful bitt*er*nes of herte / As seith the kyng Ezechiel To god I wol remembre me alle the dayes & yeres of my liff in bitt*er*nesse of myn herte / [984] This condicion of bitt*er*nesse hath .v. signes / The first is that confession mote be shamefaste / nat for to cou*er*e ne to hide his sin*ne* / but for he hath agilt his god / & defouled his soule /
¶ Austyne [985] & here-of seith seint Austyne / the herte travaileth for shame of his synne / & for he hath grete shamefastnes / he is digne to haue grete m*er*cye of god [986] Suche was the confession of the Puplicane that wolde nat heve vp his eighen to heuen / for he had offended god of heuen ffor whiche shamefastnes he had anoon the m*er*cy of god / [987] And therfore seith

seint Austyne / that suche shamefast folke / ben next for-yevenesse & remission / [988] That other signe is humylite of confession / of which seith seint Peter / humbleth yow vnder the myght of god / the honde of god is myght in confession / ffor ther-bi god foryevith the thi synnes / for he alone hath the power / [989] & this humylite shal be in herte / & in signe outwarde / ffor right as he hath humilite to god in his herte / Right so sholde he hunble his body outwarde to the preste that sitteth in godis place / [990] ffor [1] whiche in no manere / sithen that criste is souereyne / and the preste meene & mediatour bi-twex criste & the synnere / & the synnere is the laste bi wey of reson / [991] than sholde nat the synnere sitte as highe as his confessour / but knele biforn him / or at his feete / but if maladie distorbe hit / ffor he shal nat take kepe who sitte there / but in whos place that he sitteth / [992] A man that hath trespased to a lorde / and cometh to axe mercy / & maketh his accorde / And he sette him doun anoon bi the lorde / men wold holde him outrageous / & nat worthi so sone to haue remission ne mercy / [993] The .iij. signe is that thi confession shulde be ful of teres if ye may / & if ye may nat wepe with youre bodily eyghe / lete thin herte wepe / [994] suche was the confession of seint Peter ffor after that he had for-sake ihesu criste / he went out & wept ful bitterly / [995] The .iiij. signe is that he lett nat for his shame to shewe his confession / [996] suche was the confession of the Magdaleyne / that spared for no shame of hem that were at the fest for to go to oure lorde ihesu criste / & biknowe to him hir synne / [997] The .v. signe that a man be obeisaunt or a woman to resceive the penaunce that is to him enioyned / ffor certis ihesu criste / for the giltes of oo man was obediente to the deth //

¶ Peter.

¶ Petrus.

¶ Magdaleyne.

[998] The secunde condicion of verray confession / is that hit be hastily don / ffor certis if a man had a dedly wounde / euer the lenger that he tarieth to warisshe

him-selff / the more wold hit corupte / & haste him to his dethe / & eke the wounde wolde be the wers to hele / [999] And right so farith̄ hit bi synne / that longe tyme is in a man vnshewed // [1000] Certis a man ough̄t hastily to shewe his synnes / for many causes / As for drede of dethe that cometh̄ offte sodeynly / & is in no ce*r*teyne what tyme hit shal be / ne in what place / And eke the drecching of oo synne / drawith in another synne / [1001] [1] and eke the lenger that he tarieth̄ / the ferther is he from criste / & if he abide in-to his laste day / ful scarsly may he shrive him / or remembre him on his synnes / or repente him / for the grevous maladie / of his dethe / [1002] And for-asmeche as he hath̄ na in his liff / herkened ih*es*u criste / whan he hath̄ spoken vn-to him / he shal crien vn-to oure lord ih*es*u crist at his laste day / & scarsly wol he herken to him / [1003] And vnderstonde that this condicion most haue .iiij. thinges / thi shrifft moot be purveide biforn & avised / for wikked haste doth̄ no p*ro*fite / & that a man can shrive him of his synnes / be hit of p*r*ide or of envie / & so forth̄ with the spices & the circu*m*staunces / [1004] & that he haue comp*re*hended in his mynde / the nombre & the gretnesse of his synnes / & how longe that he hath leyne in synne / [1005] & eke that he be contrite / of his synnes / & in stedfast p*ur*pos bi the grace of god / neu*er*e effte to falle ayeine in synne / & eke that he drede & contrewaite him-selff / that he fle the occaciou*n*s of synne / to whiche he is enclyned / [1006] Also that thow shalt shrive the of alle thi synnes to oo man & nat a p*ar*cel to oon / & a p*ar*cel to another / that is to vnderstonde / in entente to dep*ar*ten thi confession / as for shame or drede / for hit is nough̄t but strangelyng of thi soule / [1007] ffor ce*r*tis Ih*es*u criste is al good / in him is noon imp*er*feccion / & therfore outher he foryevith al p*er*fitly / or ellis neu*er*adele // [1008] I seie nat if thow be assigned to thi penitencere / for ce*r*teyne synne that thou art bounde to shewe to him / al the remanent of thi synnes / of whiche

thou hast be shriven to thi curate / but if it like the of thin humilite / this is no dep*ar*ting of shrifft / [1009] ne I seie nat there as I speke of diuision of confession / if that thou haue licence for to shrive the to a discrete / & an [1]honest preste / & where the liketh / bi the licence eke of thi curate / that thou ne maiste wel shrive the / of al thi synnes / [1010] but lat no blot be bihynde / lete no synne be. vntolde / as fer as thow hast remembraunce / [1011] And whan thow shalt be shriven to thi curate / telle him eke of al thi synne that thou hast don / sithen that thou were last I-shriven / this is no wikked entente of division of shrifft /

[1012] And also the verray shrifft axeth c*er*teyne condic*i*ons / ffirst that thou shrive the bi thi fre wil / nat constreyned / ne for shame of folke ne for maladie / or suche thinges / ffor it is reson that he that trespaceth with his fre wil / he moot bi his fre wil confesse his trespace / [1013] noon other man shal telle his synne but he him selff / ne he ne shal nat nay it ne denye his synne / ne wretthe him ayeines the preste / for his amonesshynge to lete his synne / [1014] The secunde condicion is / that thi shrifft be lawful that is to seie / that thou that shrivist the / & eke the preste that hireth thi confession / ben verray in the feith of holy chirche // [1015] And that a man be nought dispeired / of the m*er*cy of ih*es*u criste / as Cayme or Iudas / [1016] and eke a man most accuse him of his owne trespace & nat another / but he shal blame & witen him-selff of his owne malice / & of his synne / & noon other / [1017] but natheles if that another man be occacion of his synne / or entiser of his synne / or if the estate of a p*er*sone be suche / thorugh whiche his synne is aggreged / or that he ne may nat pleynly shriven him / but he telle the p*er*sone / with whiche he hath synned / than may he telle it [1018] so / that his entente be nat to bagbite the p*er*sone but onely to declare his confession /

[1019] Thow shalt nat eke make no man*er* lesinges in thi confession / for humilite p*er*auenture to seie that thou hast don synnes / of whiche thou were
¶ Austyne. neu*er*e gilti / [1020] ffor seint Austyne seith̄ if thow bi cause of humilite makest lesinges of [1]thi selff / though thow ne were nat in synne biforne yit art thow than in synne thorugh̄ thi lesinges [1021] Thow most eke shewe thi synne / bi thi nowe p*ro*pre mouthe / but if thou be wexe dome / & nat bi no letter / ffor thou that hast don the synne / thou shalt haue the shame in confession / [1022] Thow shalt nat eke peynte thi confession / bi faire & subtile wordes / to cou*er*e the more thi synne / ffor than bigilest thou thi selff & nat the preste / thou most telle it platly be it neu*er*e so foule / ne so orrible / [1023] Thow shalt shrive the eke to a preste that is discrete / to counsaile the / And eke thou sha[l]t nat shrive for vaynglorie / ne for ypocresie / ne for no cause but onely for the dovte of Ih*es*u criste / & the hele of thi soule / [1024] Thow shalt nat eke renne to the preste al sodeynly to telle him thi synne / as whos tellith̄ a Iape or a tale / but avisily / & with grete deuocion / [1025] And gen*er*ally shrive the offte / if thou offte falle / offte arise bi confession / [1026] And though thou shrive the offter than ones of thi synne / of whiche thow hast be shriven it is
¶ Austyne. the more merite / And as seith seint Austyne / thou shalt haue the more lightly relesynge / & the grace of god / both̄ of synne & of peyne / [1027] And c*er*tis ones a yere at the leste weye hit is lawful for to be houselede / ffor certenly ones a yere alle thinges renovellen /

De satisfaccione.

[1028]
NOw haue I tolde of verry confession that is the secunde p*ar*te of penaunce /

[1029] the .iij. p*ar*te of penaunce is satisfaccion / & that stant most gen*er*ally in almes & in bodily peyne / [1030] Now ben ther .iij. man*er*e of almes / Contricion of herte / that a man openeth̄ him selff to god / Another is to have pete of the defaute of his neighbours / And the thride is in yevyng good counsaile / & comforte gostly & bodily / where men haue nede / & namely in sustenaunce of man-is foode / [1031] & to take kepe of that [1] that a man hath nede of / off these thinges gen*er*ally he hath nede / of foode / of clothing / & herborugh̄ / he hath nede also of charitable counsaille / & visityng in prison / & maladie / & sepulture of his dede bodie / [1032] and if thou maist nat visite the nedeful with thi p*er*sone / visite hem bi thi massage / & thi yifftes / [1033] these ben the gen*er*al almes & workes of charite / of hem that han temporal riches / or discrecion in counsaillyng / Off there workes shalt thow hyre at the day of dome /

[1034] these almesses shaltow don of thin owne p*ro*pre thinges / & hastily & privily if thow maiste / [1035] but natheles if thou maiste nat don hit p*r*iuily / thou shalt nat forbere to do almes neu*er* a dele though men se hit / so that it be nat don for thanke of the world / but onely for to haue the thanke of oure lorde ih*es*u criste / [1036] ffor as wittnessith̄ Seint Mathew. quinto ca*pitulo* / A Cite may nat be hidde that on a mountayne sette / ne men lighte nat a lanterne & put it vnder a busshel / but men sette hit on a candelstike / to lighten the men in the hous / [1037] Right so shal youre lighte lighten a-forne men that thei mowe seen youre goode workes / & glorifie / youre fader that is in heuen /

¶ Mathei quinto Capit*u*lo.

[1038] Now as for to speke of bodily peyne / it stonte in praieres / in wakynges / in ffastinges / & in vertuous

techinges of orisons / [1039] ye shul vnder-stonde that orisons / or praiers is for to seie / a pitous wil of herte / that redressith hit in god / & expressith it bi wordes / outwarde to renewe harmes / & to haue thinges espirituel & durable / & somtyme temporal thinges / off whiche orisons / certis in the orison of the Pater noster / hath ih*es*u criste enclosed most thinges / [1040] Certis it is p*r*ivileged of thre thinges in his dignite / ffor whiche it is more digne / than any other praiere / ffor that ih*es*u criste him selff maked / [1041] and it is shorte / for it sholde be couthe more lightly [1]and for to withholde hit the more esily in herte / & helpe*n* hem selff the offter / with the orison / [1042] And for a man sholde be the lasse wery to seie hit / And for a man may nat excuse him to lerne hit / for it is shorte & so esie / And for hit comp*re*hendith in hit selff / alle good praiers / [1043] The exposicion of this holy praiere / that is so excellent & digne / I bitake these maistres of Theologie / saue thus meche wol I seyne / that whan thou praieste that god sholde foryeve the thi giltes as thou foryeuest hem that agilten the / Be ful wel war / that thou be nat out of charite / [1044] This holy orison amennsith eke venial synne / & therfore hit apperteyneth specially to penaunce /

¶ Pater *noster*.

[1045] This praiere most be trewly seide / & in verry feith // & that men praie to god / ordinatly / discretly / & devoutely / And alwey a man shal putte his wil / to be subiette to the wil of god / [1046] this orison most eke be seide / with grete humblesse / & ful pure / honestly & nat to the anoysaunce of any man or woman / hit most eke be contenued with the workes of charite / [1047] hit availeth eke ayeines the vices of the soule / ffor as seith seint Ierome / bi fastynge ben saued the vices of the flesshe / & bi praiers the vices of the soule /

¶ Ierome

[1048] Aff*ter* this thow shalt vnder-stonde / that bodily peyne stonte in waking / for ih*es*u criste seith / waketh and praieth / that ye ne entre in to wikked

temptacion / [1049] ye shul vnder-stonde eke that fastynge stonte in thre thinges / in forberynge of bodily meete / and drinke / & in forberinge of worldly iolitees / And in forberinge of dedly synne / this is to seie / that a man shal kepe him fro dedly synne / with al his myght /

[1050] And thou shalt vnderstonde eke that god ordeyned fastinges / & to fastinges app*er*teynen .iiij. thinges [1051] largenesse to pore folke / gladnesse of herte espirituel / nat to be angry / ne anoyed / ne to grucche for he fasteth / & also at resonable houre for to eete bi [1] mesure / that is for to seie / A man shulde nat eten in vntyme / ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete / for he fasteth /

[1052] Than shalt thou vnderstonde that bodily peyne stante in disciplyne or teching / bi worde / or bi writynge / or bi ensample / also in weryng of heires or of stamyne / or of haberions on here naked flesshe / for cristes sake / & suche man*er*e penaunces / [1053] but war the wel that suche penaunces on thi flessh / ne make nought thin herte bitter / or angery / or anoyed / of thi selff / ffor better it is to caste awaie thin heire / than for to caste a-wey the swettnesse of oure lorde ih*es*u criste / [1054] And therfore seit[h] seint Poule / ¶ Poule. Clotheth yow as thei that ben chosen of god / in herte of misericorde / debonairte / suffraunce / & suche man*er*e of clothinge / of whiche ih*es*u criste is more apaiede / than of heire / or of haberiou*n* /

[1055] Than is his disciplyne / in knokkynge of thi breste / in schourginge with yerdes / in knelynges / in tribulacions / [1056] in sufferinge paciently wronges / that ben don to him / And eke vnpacient sufferaunce of maladies / or lesinge of worldly catel / or of wiff / or childe / or other frendes /

[1057] Than shalt thou vnderstonde / whiche thinges distourben penaunce / and that is in .iij. maners / And that is drede / shame / & wanhope / that is desp*er*acion / [1058] And for to speken first of drede / ffor whiche he

weneth̄ that he may suffre no penaunce / [1059] there ayeines is remedie / for to thenke that bodily penaunce is but shorte / litel / at the regarde of the peyne of helle / that is cruel & so longe / that it lasteth withouten ende /

[1060] Now a-yeines the shame that a man hath to shriven him / and namely these ypocrites / that wolden be holde so *per*fite / that thei haue noon nede to shriven hem / [1061] Ayeines that shame / shal a man thenke / that bi wey of reson / that he / that hath nat ben a-shamed / to do foule thinges / Certis him oughte nat to ben a-shamed to don faire thinges / & goode thinges / & that is confessiou*n*s / [1062] A man shulde eke thenke / that god seeth̄ & woot wel thi thought*es* / [1]& al thi workes / to him may nothing[1] be hidde ne cou*er*ed / [1063] men shulde eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome to them that ben nat penitente / ne shriven in this p*re*sent liff / [1064] ffor alle the creatures in heuen erthe & in helle / shulle se appertely al that they hiden in this worlde /

[1065] Now for to speke of the hope of hem that ben so necligent & slowe to shrive hem / hit stante in two man*er*s / [1066] that on is that he hopeth̄ to live longe / & for to purchase meche riches for his delite / & than he wol shrive him / & as seith̄ he may as him semeth̄ tymely I-nough̄ come to shriffte / [1067] Another is of the surquidrie that he hath̄ in the hope of cristes m*er*cy / [1068] And ayeines the first vice he shal thenke / that oure liff is in no sekernesse / & eke that al the riches in the worlde is in auenture & passinge as a shadowe on a wal // [1069] And as seith̄ seint Gregorie / that hit app*er*teyneth̄ to the grete righ̄twisnesse of god / that neu*er*e shal the peyne stinte of hem / that neu*er*e wolde withdrawe hem fro synne here thankes but eu*er* contenue in synne / for that p*er*petual wil to do synne / shullen thei haue p*er*petual peine //

¶ Gregorius

[1070] Wanhope is in two man*er*s / The first wanhope is in the m*er*ci of criste / That other is that thei

 [1 thoughtes *repeated;* leaf 309]

thenke / that thei myghte nat longe p*er*seu*er*e in goodnesse / [1071] The first wanhope cometh of that he demeth that he hath synned so gretly / so offte / & so longe lien in synne / that he shal noughte be sauede / [1072] Certis ayeines that cursed wanhope he shulde thenke / that the passion of ih*es*u criste is more stronge for to vnbynde / than synne is for to bynde / [1073] Ayeines the seconde wanhope [. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
[1074] . . *no gap in the MS.*] that he demeth that he shulde nat longe p*er*seu*er*e in goodnes / he shal thenke that the febelnesse of the Deuel may nothing don but if men wil suffre him / [1075] & eke he shal have strengthe of the helpe of god / & of al holy chirche & of the p*ro*tecc*i*ons of Aungels / if hem luste //

[1076] Than shul men vnderstonde what is the fruyte of penaunce [1] as after the worde of ih*es*u criste / hit is the endeles blisse of heuen / [1077] there ioye hath no contrariouste of woo / ne greuaunce / there al harmes ben passed of this p*re*sent liff / there as is the sekernesse from the peyne of helle / there as is the blisful companye that reioysen hem eu*er*more / eu*er*yche of otheris Ioye / [1078] there as the body of man that whilom was foule & derke is more clere than the sonne / there as whilom the bodi was sike freyle feble & mortal / is immortal / & so stronge & so hole / that there may nothing*e* empeire it / [1079] there as neither is hungre / thrust / ne colde / but eu*er*y soule replenesshed with the sighte of the p*er*fite knowynge of god / [1080] this blisful regne may man purchace bi pou*er*te espirituel / & the glorie bi lowenesse / the plente of ioye bi hungre & thruste / & the reste bi travaile / & the liff bi deth / & mortificacion of synne /

[1 leaf 309, back, and last]

To thilke liff he vs bringe that bought vs with his precious bloode. Amen /

Here enden the talis of Caunturbury / And next thautour taketh leve.

[1081]
NOw preye I to hem alle that herken this litil tretis or reden / that if ther be any thing in hit that liketh hem / that therof thei thanke oure lord ihesu criste / of whom procedeth al witte & al goodnesse / [1082] And if ther be any thing that displesen hem / I preie hem also that thei a-recte hit / to the defaute of myne vnconnynge / & nat to my wil that wolde ful fayne haue seide better if I hadde connynge / [1083] ffor oure booke seith / al that is writen is writen for oure doctryne / & that is myne entent / [1084] wher-fore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of god / that ye preie for me / that criste haue mercy on me / and foryeve me my gultes / [1085] & namely of my translaciones / & endityngeſ of worldly vanytees / the which I revoke in my retraccions / [1086] As is the booke of Troylus / the booke also of ffame / the booke of .xxv. ladies / the booke of the Duchesse / the booke of seint Valenty [1 day of þe parlement of briddes // The Tales Caunterbury. tho þat sownen into syn / [1087] The boke of þe leon / And many anoþer boke if thei were in my remembraunce / & many a songe / & many A lecherous tayl. ¶ Of þe which Crist for his grete mercy for-yeue me þe syn. [1088] ¶ But of the translacion of Boece de consolacion and oþer bokeȝ of legendes of Seintes & Omelies / And moralite & deuocion / [1089] That thank I oure lorde Iesu Crist & his blisful moder and al the seinteȝ in heuen [1090] Biseking hem þat þei fro hen forthe vnto my lyves ende send me grace to bewaile my giltes / And to stodien to þe sauacioun of my soule ¶ And graunte me space of verrey penitence ¶ Con-

[1 Hatton MS. 1, *leaf* 275, *back*]

fessiou*n* and satisfacciou*n* to doñ in this present life [1091] þorgh þe benigne grace of him þat is king of kinges & prest ouer alle prestes. þat bought vs with the precious blode of his hert / [1092] so þat I may beñ oon of hem at þe day of dome. þat shullen be saued And he that wrote this boke also / Amen. Qui cum patre &c.[1]]

[[1] *Hatton extract ends.*]

[*late hand*] O Mater Dei T | H Memento Mej

[*late hand*] P*er*tinet Thomā Heed ciuis Londoniar'

[*late hand*] Eleison

[*Two blank leaves scribbled over.*]

End of Selden MS.

APPENDIX (to Group B, p. 587).

[*Christ Church MS.* 152.] [on leaf 173, back, sign. k 2, back]

¶ Sire Nonnes preest oure hoost seyde a none
y-blessed be thy breth & eu*er*y stoone
This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere
But be my trouthe if *tho*u were seculere
Thow woldeste bene a tredefoul a right
ffor if thow haue corage as *tho*u haste myght
The were nede of hennes as I wene
Ye moo than .vij. tymes seventene
See whiche braunnes hath *thi*s gentel preeste
So grete a nekke & so large a breeste
He loketh as a Sparhauke with his yen
Hym nedeth nat his colour for to dyen [leaf 174, sign. k. 3]
with Brasile ne with Greyne of Portyngale /
Now sire faire falle yow for youre tale
And aftir he with fuꝗ mery chere
Saide vnto a nother as ye shulle here

Here is ended the Nonnes prestes tale
And folowiꝗ the p*ro*loge of the Mauncipies tale

Chaucer Society. #67

THE

Corpus MS

(CORPUS CHRISTI COLL., OXFORD)

OF

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

EDITED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

PART VII.

Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE CHAUCER SOCIETY BY

N. TRÜBNER & CO., 57 & 59, LUDGATE HILL.

MDCCCLXXIV.

The Chaucer Society.

Editor in Chief:—F. J. Furnivall, Esq., 3, Albion's Square, Primrose Hill, N.W.
Hon. Sec.:—W. A. Dalziel, Esq., 67, Victoria Road, Finsbury Park, N.

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To do honour to Chaucer, and to let the lovers and students of him see how far the best improved Manuscripts of his works differ from the printed texts, this Society was founded in 1868. There were then, and are still, many questions of metre, pronunciation, orthography, and etymology yet to be settled, for which more proofs of Manuscripts were and are wanted; and it is hardly too much to say that every line of Chaucer contains points that need reconsideration. The founder (Mr Furnivall) began with *The Canterbury Tales*, and has given of them unparallel columns in Royal 4to six of the best therefore unprinted Manuscripts known. Inasmuch as the parallel arrangement necessitated the alteration of the places of certain tales in some of the MSS., a print of each MS has been issued separately, following the order of its original. The first six MSS printed have been; the Ellesmere (by leave of the Earl of Ellesmere); the Hengwrt (by leave of W. W. E. Wynne, Esq.); the Camb. Univ. Libr., MS Gg. 4. 27; the Corpus, Oxford; the Petworth (by leave of Lord Leconfield); and the Lansdowne 851 (Brit. Mus.). The Harleian 3574 will follow.

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II.	The Prologue and Knight's Tale from the	Ellesmere MS.	
III.	" " " " " " "	Hengwrt	" 154
IV.	" " " " " " "	Cambridge	" Gg. 4. 27
V.	" " " " " " "	Corpus	" Oxford
VI.	" " " " " " "	Petworth	"
VII.	" " " " " " "	Lansdowne	" 851

(separate issue of the Texts forming Part I of the Six-Text edition.)

The issue for **1869**, in the **First Series**, is,

VIII.	The Miller's, Reeve's, and Cook's Tales	Ellesmere MS.	
IX.	" " " " " "	Hengwrt "	with an Appendix of "Gamelyn" from six MSS.
X.	" " " " " "	Cambridge "	
XI.	" " " " " "	Corpus "	
XII.	" " " " " "	Petworth "	
XIII.	" " " " " "	Lansdowne "	

(separate issue of the Texts forming the Six-Text, Part II, No. XIV.)

The issue for **1870**, in the **First Series**, is,

XIV. The Miller's, Reeve's and Cook's Tales, with an Appendix of the Spurious Tale of Gamelyn, in 6 parallel Texts. (Six-Text, Part II.)

The issue for **1871**, in the **First Series**, is,

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XVI. The Man of Law's Tale, from the Ellesmere MS.

XVII. " " " " " " " Cambridge MS.

XVIII. " " " " " " " Corpus MS.

XIX. The Shipman's, Prioress's, and Man of Law's Tales, from the Petworth MS.

XX. The Man of Law's Tale, from the Lansdowne MS.

(issue with sundries of fourteen groupings of Tables of Tales in the Ellesmere MS.)

THE

Corpus MS

OF

Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

THE

Corpus MS

(*Corpus Christi Coll., Oxford.*)

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1868-1879.

First Series.

CLAY AND TAYLOR, THE CHAUCER PRESS, BUNGAY.

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[1] Has not the Friar lines 252 *b*, *c*, of the Hengwrt MS.

Group		Six-Text Pages	Corpus Pages
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F.	§ 4. **Franklin's** (Proem and) **Tale**[3] (of Dorigen, Arviragus, and Aurilius)	500	351

[1] 6 stanzas of 6 lines each, ryming *ababcb*, each with the same 3 rymes, *-ence*, *-ayle*, *-ynde*, as against the 7-line stanzas of the Tale, ryming *ababbcc*, with varying rymes.

[2] Like the Petworth and Lansdowne MSS., the Corpus has a spurious l. 1778, instead of the genuine E 1777, p. 458 *S-T*, p. 336 *Corp.*, and a spurious l. 1816 (misplaced), p. 459 *S-T*, p. 337 *Corp.* Like Pet. and Lansd., it leaves out l. 1927-8, p. 462 *S-T*, p. 340 *Corp.*, but does not, like Lansd., leave out E 2281-8, p. 350, *Corp.*

[3] Like the Petworth and Lansdowne MSS., the Corpus leaves

Group		Six-Text Pages	Corpus Pages
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[1] The 4 'Modern Instances' are in their right place, after Zenobia, p. 268 *S-T*, p. 555 *Corpus.*

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Appendix.

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1.

END OF THE MERCHANT'S TALE.

[for sothē I wol no lenger yow contrarie
now lete vs turne ageyne to Ianuarie 2320
that in the gardeyne / wiţh his fresh*e* May
syngeţh ful meryere / than the popyngay
¶ yow loue I beste / *and* shal *and* other noon
so longe aboute the aleyis / is he goon 2324
til he was comyn / ageyns the Perye
where as this Damyan / sitteth ful merye
an hiğh amonge the fresh*e* levis grene
this fresh*e* May / that is so brigħt *and* shene 2328
gan for to sike / *and* seide allas my side
now sir q*uo*d she / for augħt that may bitide
I moste haue of the perys / that I se
or I mot dye / so sore longeţh me 2332
to eten of the smale peris grene
helpe for hir loue / that is of heuen quene
I telle yow wel / a woman in my pligħte
may haue to fruyte / so grete an appetite 2336
that she may dye / but she hit haue
allas q*uo*d he / that I nad here a knaue
that coude clymbe / allas allas q*uo*d he
that I am blynde / ye sir no fors q*uo*d she 2340
but wolde ye vouchesaff / for godis sake
the pery with-inne youre armes to take
for wel I woot / that ye mystrute me
than shulde I clymbe / wel I-now q*uo*d she 2344
so I my fote myğht sette / vppon youre bak
for sothē q*uo*d he / in me shal be no lak
myğht I yow helpen / with myn herte bloode
he stoupiţh down / *and* on his bak she stoode 2348
and caughte hir bi a twiste / *and* vp she goothe
ladyes I pray yow / be ye not wroothe
I can not glose / I am a rude man [*leaf* 136, *back*]
and sodeynly / anoon this Damyan 2352

CORPUS 1* (6-T. 473) [this page, Arch. Seld. B. 14]

gan pulle vp the smok / *and* in he thronge [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
and whan that Pluto saw / that grete wronge
to Ianuarie he gaff ageyne / his sight
and made him se / as wel as eu*er* he myght 2356
and whan that he / had his sight agayne
ther was neu*er* man of thing / so fayne
but on his wiff / his thought was eu*er*mo
vp to the tre / he caste his eyghen two 2360
and saw how Damyan / his wiff had dressed
in suche man*er*e / hit may not ben expressed
but if I wolde speke / vncurteysly
and vp he gaff / a roryng *and* a cry 2364
as doth the moder / whan the childe shal dye
oowte helpe allas / harrow he gan crye
o stronge lady stoure / what doist thow
and she answerde / sir what eylith yow 2368
haue pacience *and* reso*un* / in youre mynde
I haue yow holpen / on both*e* youre eyghen blynde
vp perel of my soule / I shal not lyen
as me was tavght / to hele with youre eyghen 2372
was nothing bet / to make yow se
than strogle with a man / vppon a tre
god woot I did hit / in ful good entente
stride q*uo*d he / ye algate in hit wente 2376
god yeve yow both / on shames deth to dien
he did the so / I sigh it with myn eyghen
and ellis be I honged / by the hals
than is q*uo*d she / my medicyne al fals 2380
for c*er*teynly if that ye myghten see
ye wolde not seye / tho wordis vn-to me
ye han som glymsyng / *and* no p*ar*fite sight
I se q*uo*d he as wel / as eu*er* I myght 2384
thonked be god / with both myn eyghen two
and bi my trouthe me thoughte he did the so
ye mase mase goode sir / q*uo*d she [*leaf* 131]
this thanke haue I / for I haue made yow se 2388

allas q*uo*d she / that eu*er* I was so kynde [MS Arch. Seld. B. 14]
now dame q*uo*d he / lete al passe out of mynde
com down my lef / *and* if I haue myssaide
god helpe me so / as I am euel apaide 2392
but bi my fader soule / I wende haue seyne
how that this Damyan / had bi the leyne
and that thi smok / had leyne vppon thi brest
ye sir q*uo*d she / ye may wene as yow lest 2396
but sir a man / that wakiħ out of his slepe
he may not sodeynly / ne wel taken kepe
vppon a thing / ne sen hit p*ar*fitly
til that he ben a-dawed / verrily 2400
riġht so a man / that longe hath blynde I-be
ne may not sodeynly / so wel I-se
first whan his sigħt / is newe com ageyne
as he that haħ / a day or two I-seyne 2404
til that youre sigħt / I-stabled be a while
ther may ful many a sigħt / yow bigile
beħ war I pray yow / for bi heuen kyng
ful many a man wenyħ / to se a thing 2408
and hit is al another / than hit semeħ
he that mysconceiviħ / mys demeħ
and wiħ that worde / she lepe doun fro the tre
this Ianuarie / who is glad but he 2412
he kissiħ hir / *and* clippiħ hir / ful ofte
and on hir wombe / he stroketħ hir ful softe
and to his paleys hoom / he haħ hir lad
now goode men I pray yow / to be glad 2416
thus endiħ here my tale / of Ianuarie
god blesse vs / *and* his moder seynt Marie. Amen. 2418
Here endiħ the Marchauntis tale of Ianuarie and May.]

2

[*Arch. Seld. MS B* 14, *on leaf* 131.]

[and bigynneth̄ the Squyers p*rologe*

By godis m*er*cy / seide oure ost tho
now such̄ a wiff / I p*ra*y god kepe vs fro 2420
lo whiche slighthis / & sotilteis [*leaf* 131, *back*]
in women ben / for thei be besy as beis
to vs sely men / for to disseive
and fro a soth̄ / eu*er* wol thei weive 2424
bi this marchauntis tale / hit p*re*vith̄ wele
but douteles as trewe as any stele
I haue a wiff / though̄ she pore be
but of hir tonge / a labbyng shrewe is she 2428
and yit she hath an hepe / of vicis mo
therof no force / lete al such̄ thingis go
but woot ye what / in consail be hit seide
me rewith sore / I am to hir I-teyde 2432
for & I sholde reken / eu*er*y man*er*e vise
whiche that she hath / I-wis I were to nyse
and cause whi / hit sholde reported be
and tolde to hir / bi some of this mayne 2436
bi whom it nedith not / to declare
syn women conne outere suche cheffare
and eke my witt / suffisith̄ not ther-to
to tellen al / ther-fore my tale is do] 2440

3.

[*MS. Arch. Seld. B.* 14, *leaf* 114, *back.*]

[And next folwith the Marchauntis prolog

Weping *and* waylyng / care *and* other sorowe
I knowe I-now on even / *and* on morowe
q*uo*d the marchaunte / *and* so don*e* other mo
that wedded be / I trowe that hit be so 1216
for wel I woot / hit farith so bi me
I haue a wiff / the worst that may be
for though the fende / to hir coupled were
she wolde him ou*er*-macche / I dar wel swere 1220
what shulde I yow rehers in special
hir high malice / she is a shrewe at al
ther is a longe / *and* a large difference
bitwixe Gresildis grete pacience 1224
and of my wiff / the passing cruelte
were I vnbou*n*den / also mot y the
I wolde neu*er* efte comyn / in the snare
we wedded men liven / in sorowe *and* care 1228
a-say who so wol / *and* he shal fynde
that I sey sothe / bi seint Thomas of ynde
and for the more p*ar*te / I sey not alle
god shilde that it sholde / so bi-falle 1232
a goode sir oste / I haue wedded be
this monthes two / *and* more not p*ar*de
and yit I trowe / he wolde al his live
wiveles han ben / though men wolde him rive 1236
in-to the herte / ne coude in no manere [*leaf* 115]
tellen so meche sorowe / as I now here
couthe telle / of my wivis cursidnesse
now q*uo*d oure oste marchaunt / so god yow blesse 1240
syn ye so mechel knowen / of that arte
ful hertely I pray yow / telle vs parte
gladly q*uo*d he / but of myn owne sore
for hevy herte / I telle may no more 1244

Here endith the Marchaunt is p*ro*log

CORPUS 5* (6-T. 442) [this page, Arch. Seld. B. 14]

4.

THE SQUIRE'S HEAD-LINK.

[*MS. Arch. Seld. B.* 14, *on leaf* 131, *back.*]

[Squyer com nere / if that youre wille be
and sey somwhat of loue / for c*er*tis ye
konne theron / as mec̄h as any man
nay sir q*uo*d he / but I wol sey as I cau
with herty wil / for I wol not rebelle
ageyne youre lust / a tale wol I telle
haue me excused / if that I speke a-mys
my wil is good / & lo my tale is this

Here endith the Squyers prolog]

5.

[*Laud MS* 600, *leaf* 171.]

[Here begynneþ þe prolog of þe frankeleyn

In faiþ squier þou hast þe wel I-quytt
And gentilli I p*rai*se wel þi witt
Q*uo*d þe frankeleyn considering þi youþe
So felyngli þou spekest sir I aloupe 676
As to my dome þer is noon þat is here
Of eloquence shal be þi pere
[yf þat þ*o*u lyve / god yeve þe gode chaunce [Haistwell MS]
And in v*er*tue / send the contynuaunce] 680
ffor of þi speche I haue gret deynte
I haue a sone and bi þe Trinite
I had leuere þan xx^ti^ pounde worþ lond
þough it right now were fallen in my honde 684
Ye ar a man of suche discrecioñ
As þat ye ben fy vpon possessioñ
But if a man be vertuous w*ith*-al
I haue my sone snybbed and yut shal 688
ffor he to vertu listeþ not entende
But for to pleie at dies and to despende
And lese al þat he haþ is his vsage
And he haþ leu*er*e talke wiþ a page 692
þan to co*m*mune wiþ any gentil wight
Where he might lerne gentilnesse a-right
Strawe for youre gentilnesse q*uo*d our host
What frankeleyn p*ar*de wel þow wost Frankeleyn 696
þat eche of of (*sic*) you mot tellen atte leste
A tale or too / or breken his beheste [*leaf* 171, *back*]
þat knowe I wel q*uo*d þe ffrankeleyn certeyn Frankeleyn
I p*rai*e you not haueþ me in desdeyn 700

þow to þis man I speke a worde or too
Telle on þi tale wiþouten wordes moo
Gladli sir host q*uo*d he I wol obeie
Vn-to youre wille now herkeneþ what I seie 704
I wil you not contrarie in no wise
As ferre as þat my wittes wil suffise
I p*rai*e to god þat it mai plesen you
þan wot I wel þat it is good Inow] 708

CORPUS MS. APPENDIX

OF SECTIONS, WOODCUTS, ETC., NOT IN THE CORPUS MS.

PAGE

1. End of the *Merchant's Tale*, Group E, § 4, l. 2319-2418, from MS. Arch. Selden, B. 14, Bodleian Library. (See p. 350 above.) ... 1*-3*

2. The *Merchant's End-Link*, Group E, § 5, from MS. Arch. Selden, B. 14, Bodleian Library. ('Twould have followd p. 350 (or p. 3*) above, had it been in the Corpus MS.) 4*

3. The *Clerk-Merchant-Link*, Group E, § 3, p. 442 Six-Text, from MS. Arch. Selden, B. 14. ('Twould have followd p. 320 above, had it been in the Corpus MS.) 5*

4. The *Squire's Head-Link*, Group F, § 1, p. 478 Six-Text, from MS. Arch. Selden, B. 14. ('Twould have come next before p. 194, instead of the *Merchant-Shipman Link*, p. 193, had it been in the Corpus MS.) ... 6*

5. The *Squire-Franklin Link*, Group F, § 3, p. 498-9 Six-Text, from the Laud MS. 600, Bodleian Library. ('Twould have followd p. 212 above, had it been in the Corpus MS.) 7*

6. Woodcuts of the 23 *Tellers of the* 24 *Canterbury Tales*, from the Ellesmere MS.[1]

7. Woodcuts of 6 *Tellers of Canterbury Tales*, the Cook, Reeve, Wife of Bath, Pardoner, Monk, and Manciple—and of 6 *Allegorical Figures in the Parson's Tale*—Wrath and Mercy, Gluttony and Abstinence, Lechery and Chastity, from MS. Gg. 4. 27 in the Univ. Libr., Cambridge.

[1] The Ellesmere cuts can be arrangd either in their order in the Ellesmere MS., or in the *Six-Text* order of the Tales. In the latter they 'll be easier to find. See these two orders on p. 700.

Six-Text Order of Tales.

		Group
1.	Knight	A
2.	Miller	
3.	Reeve	
4.	Cook	
5.	Man of Law	B
6.	Shipman	
7.	Prioress	
8.	Chaucer	
9.	Monk	
10.	Nun's Priest	
11.	Doctor	C
12.	Pardoner	
13.	Wife of Bath	D
14.	Friar	
15.	Sum'ner	
16.	Clerk	E
17.	Merchant	
18.	Squire	F
19.	Franklin	
20.	Second Nun	G
21.	Canon's Yeoman	
22.	Manciple	H
23.	Parson	I

Ellesmere MS. Order.

		Group
1.	Knight	A
2.	Miller	
3.	Reeve	
4.	Cook	
5.	Man of Law	B_1
6.	Wife of Bath	D
7.	Friar	
8.	Sum'ner	
9.	Clerk	E
10.	Merchant	
11.	Squire	F
12.	Franklin	
13.	Doctor	C
14.	Pardoner	
15.	Shipman	B_2
16.	Prioress	
17.	Chaucer	
18.	Monk	
19.	Nun's Priest	
20.	Second Nun	G
21.	Canon's Yeoman	
22.	Manciple	H
23.	Parson	I

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